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A
GOSSIP'S STORY,
AND
A LEGENDARY TALE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
ADVANTAGES OF EDUCATION.

" Nor Peace nor Ease the Heart can know,
" Which, like the Needle true,
" Turns at the touch of Joy and Woe,
" Yet, turning, trembles too."

GREVILLE'S ODE TO INDIFFERENCE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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A
GOSSIP'S STORY,
AND
A LEGENDARY TALE.

CHAPTER XIX.

An important incident announced in pretty language.

BUT while the fair Nymph thus continued to hang her virgin offerings on the shrine of friendship, Mr. Clermont acknowledged himself subdued by the irresistible force of a superior divinity. His heart was naturally susceptible of the power of beauty, and his youthful imagination, unrestrained by experience, and unsubdued by time, annexed to the lovely form of Marianne Dudley, every idea of 'perfect, fair and good;' all the images of excellence that

“ Fable ever feign’d,
“ Or youthful poets fancy when they love.”

He perceived through the clear transparency of her exquisite complexion, a mind unclouded by any shade of error, and radiated by all the splendor of grace and virtue: and in the swimming lustre of her azure eyes he not inaccurately read the soft emotions of a melting soul. Did ten thousand worlds present equal attractions to that of calling such an angel his? I am confident every lover under twenty will answer—no.

To accelerate the conquest of his heart, love was increased by difficulty. Her rejection of Mr. Pelham was a convincing proof that she was not easily won; and though the smile which beamed in her lovely face at his approach, might have told him he was a welcome guest, he had too high an idea of her perfections, to suppose they would be the reward of his vows. But should the goddess be propitious, might not parental authority inter-

A GOSSIP'S STORY.

interfere? This, though a probable, was only a secondary terror; for supposing himself blessed with her favour, he felt disposed to brave the frowns of fortune and of fate.

Miss Dudley had declined any family intercourse till her father's return; but Mr. Clermont always found excuses for another call. Sometimes he apprehended one of the ladies had a slight cold, and then civility required that he should make enquiries after her health. Again, Marianne expressed a wish that she could get a Canary-bird, and the attentive lover had it in his power to present her with a charming little songster; another day, she was hardly mistress of a favourite piece of musick, and Mr. Clermont was so happy in his manner of teaching, that she learnt much more from his instructions than the lessons of her master. Then on starting a literary topick, she had not read an author which he commended, and fortunately having the book at home, he insisted upon bringing it

next day. Thus ever restless but when in her company, he repeated his visits, gazed upon her charms, magnified her perfections, and drained, even to its dregs, the intoxicating cup of love.

Such an admirer, or, to speak with more precision, an adorer, was too much adapted to Marianne's taste to be viewed with real indifference. But the passion, which in Mr. Clermont's heart flamed with ardour, and spoke with animation; in the softer character of Marianne assumed the form of gentle melancholy. Louisa perceived with pain the change in her sister's manner, and easily divined the cause. The behaviour of Mr. Clermont was too marked to allow her to doubt of his sentiments; yet she prudently wished that her sister might not bestow her *whole* heart, till certain that *no* obstacles would arise to make her regret its loss.

The frequent visits of Mr. Clermont during her father's absence, gave Miss Dudley the more concern, as she knew not how to decline them. She endeavoured

voured to engage her sister in society, but Marianne's reluctance to quit her beloved solitude was invincible. At last, she succeeded so far as to prevail upon her to take a tour, for a few days, amongst the beautiful scenery with which they were surrounded; but hardly had they proceeded to the end of the first stage, when Mr. Clermont and his sister overtook them, who, as he thought, very fortunately, had just set out upon exactly the same route. How was Louisa to escape this new embarrassment? Even the *prudent* Marianne thought they could not decline his proposal of joining their party, without evident rudeness.

As no vigilance could now guard against repeated interviews, Miss Dudley felt herself obliged to commit her sister to the guard of her own circumspection. Frequent conversations amongst the delightful objects which nature presented to their view, so forcibly increased Mr. Clermont's enthusiasm, that he no longer brooked the restraint of silence. He seized

seized an opportunity of addressing his charmer, as he was conducting her along a woodland dell, at a little distance from the rest of the party. With all the glowing colouring of romantick tenderness, with all the impassioned eloquence of youthful impetuosity, he communicated the secret of his heart. His blushing mistress listened in silent confusion, her complacency at seeing her own idea of a lover realized, was abated only by recollecting that she "was sworn never to think of love." Being pressed for an answer, she with some hesitation mentioned her determined preference of a single life; but intermixed this declaration with so much esteem for Mr. Clermont, and so much pity for his misery, that though she doubtless intended to blast all his hopes, she did not actually reduce him to despair. He implored her forgiveness: it was readily granted; he then intreated he might preserve the tender regard, the enchanting confidence with which he had been favoured. To this
the

the lady assented, on condition of his never naming the word love; he in reply promised to confine his unhappy passion *if possible* to his own bosom, and thus the quondam lovers became ostensible friends.

The rest of the tour was extremely agreeable to both parties. Marianne's spirits, which probably had suffered by too close confinement, received considerable benefit from the excursion. The change was so visible to Louisa, that she could not avoid rallying her sister upon the cause of this sudden alteration. Marianne's heart was formed for confidence, and she readily informed Louisa of the circumstance of Mr. Clermont's addresses, and her total rejection. Miss Dudley did not appear to think the denial *quite* so peremptory as Marianne intended it should prove; and that opinion seemed confirmed by the vivacity of the rejected lover. Perplexed at this suggestion, Marianne determined to appeal to her Eliza Milton, who was an excellent casuist in all points of love and honour. On the evening

evening she returned home, she retired early from supper, in order to write down the whole particulars. But the affecting sight which she saw on entering her dressing-room, incapacitated her for using her pen. It was no other than the little canary-bird, her favourite pet, lifeless at the bottom of its cage, and insensible to the caresses of its weeping mistress. I do not insinuate that Marianne's regret was increased by any association of ideas; she was passionately fond of all kinds of birds, and certainly did not prize this the more, from having been the present of a *rejected* lover. The accident however afforded Mr. Clermont a fresh opportunity of urging his suit, for assuming the character of the dead warbler, he presented Marianne with the verses following :

SONNET,

ON THE DEATH OF A CANARY-BIRD,

Far from the sunny isle, and vine-hung grove,
 My native soil, to Britain's temp'rate sky
 I came to learn the tale of hopeless love,
 To chaunt its woes to Delia, and to die.

Of

Oft shall the penfive maid those notes recall,
Whose varied melody did once engage,
And oft the tear of kind regret shall fall,
As sad she gazes on my vacant cage.
Yet, gentle mourner, not thy tears or sighs,
Can life's extinguish'd taper re-illumine;
And when for thee despairing Strephon dies,
Thy angel pity cannot break his tomb:
Yet now such pow'r is lodg'd in thy soft eyes,
One tender glance would clear the morbid gloom,

Marianne discovered in this composition a charm infinitely superior to that of a mere well-turned compliment, and censured Louisa's commendation of the poetry, as by no means sufficiently animated. Mrs. Patty, who happened to be present when the subject was discussed between the sisters, joined in the conversation, and did not, by any means, "damn with faint praise." She had now commenced as warm an advocate for Mr. Clermont, as she had been for his predecessors Pelham and Alsop, not from the mercenary motives which induced her to plead for the latter gentleman, but from
the

the natural affection which she bore to handsome people. Though her lady seldom interrupted her when Mr. Clermont was her theme; still she so constantly persisted in her determination of "withering upon the virgin thorn," that Patty began to apprehend some serious disaster must befall her as a judgment upon her obstinacy: either that she would be metamorphosed into a rock of marble, or fetched away by the ghost of some lover, who had died in despair. Resolved therefore, by giving fair warning, to discharge her own duty, she constantly entertained her lady during her hours of attendance, with the dreadful consequences of female disdain, beginning with Bateman hanging himself for love, and ending with the cruelty of Barbara Allen.

CHAP. XX.

An example of polished benevolence furnishes a strong argument against melancholy discontent.

WHILE the wavering balance of female resolution continued suspended, before Mrs. Patty's eloquence, or some weightier motive made the nodding scale preponderate in Mr. Clermont's favour, Mr. Dudley returned home. His arrival relieved Louisa from much anxiety for his health, and peace of mind, and many apprehensions for her sister's future tranquillity, as she was now certain of the assistance of an able adviser. Mr. Dudley's account of his own affairs was more and more distressing. The limitations under which the estate had been bequeathed to Mr. Tonnereau, did not, upon further examination, appear to be surmountable; and even government had given up all hopes of the safety of the
Leeward

Leeward Island fleet: the underwriter too, who had insured the ship in which Mr. Dudley's property was embarked, declared himself reduced by repeated losses, to a state of insolvency. Yet though exposed to the pressure of so many various misfortunes, Louisa with delight perceived that her father's mind had lost much of that gloomy despondency, which depressed it when he left Stannadine, and which had appeared to his excellent daughter a severer misfortune than the loss of that wealth she had been accustomed to enjoy.

Mr. Dudley accounted for the change. "Perhaps, my love," said he, "of all the evils attendant on poverty, none are more to be lamented than the querulous humour it excites, even in liberal and benevolent minds. People in unhappy circumstances are not only apt to view the comforts they are forced to relinquish, with repining regret, almost approaching to envy; they too often consider the sons of affluence, as
enjoying

enjoying their calamities, making them the subject of illiberal mirth, and looking down with contempt upon the children of adversity. The real afflictions incident to penury, are less harassing to our fortitude, than the supposition of our being insulted by

“ The proud man’s contumely,
 “ The insolence of office, and the spurns,
 “ Which patient merit of th’ unworthy takes.

“ Bad as the world is, I believe this happens less frequently than the unhappy suppose; and doubtless it is their duty to avoid indulging these painful sensibilities; but they are so congenial to a reflecting independent mind struggling with distress, and are so strengthened by the general opinion of mankind, and the opinions not only of poets, but of moral writers, and divines; that it is almost impossible for a person to feel pecuniary difficulties, without supposing themselves to be ill-used and forsaken. It was with these sentiments

sentiments I left you, and though not insensible to neglect myself, I anticipated it with greater terror, as I imagined it would fall with ten-fold violence upon you; who have been accustomed to be welcomed with delight, heard with attention, and answered with respect. Mr. Pelham, my dear, has made me open my eyes to a brighter prospect; and though few, like this excellent young man, measure their conduct to the unfortunate by that divine benevolence, which regards the keen susceptibility of misery, instead of the cold rules of civility,—though few, I say, like him divert by their kind attentions the recollection of that distress, which the yet unsubdued spirit of independence will not permit their fortune to relieve; yet still, Louisa, there are many generous minds in the world; and much of the neglect of which affliction complains is casual and accidental. May you, my dear, consider it as such! or rather may you meet with a Pelham, to raise you above the torment of these reflections!”

Mr. Dudley's conclusion was more affecting to Louisa than he intended. She would have repeated his energetick wish, but recollecting herself, determined to think of this most amiable man, only as the friend and comforter of her father.

Mr. Dudley's intention of paying a respectful visit of thanks to Lord Clermont, was prevented by that nobleman's assiduous politeness; for he waited upon him the morning after his return, and presented his son to him, as one whose highest ambition was to obtain his approbation. Lord Clermont expressed his wish for an intimacy between the families, with a warmth which neither admitted of denial nor evasion; and plainly shewed that more than a *neighbourly* intercourse was desired. Mr. Clermont's behaviour afforded a further explanation, and though the delicacy inseparable from female attachment prevented Marianne from making any intentional discovery of her sentiments; yet the blush of pleasure which lighted up her face at her lover's

lover's approach, and the pensive absence of mind which followed his departure, intimated a preference which the discerning father hardly felt inclined to limit to the name of friendship. /

Lord Clermont did not long permit Mr. Dudley to found his opinion upon suspicion only; he avowed his son's attachment, and his warm approbation of his choice, in terms which seemed to indicate an apprehension that difficulties would be started on Mr. Dudley's side. What then was his astonishment when that gentleman declared, that his daughter was an absolute mistress of her person and fortune, and that if she inclined to favour Mr. Clermont, the paternal sanction would be cheerfully bestowed? But in order to account for his Lordship's surprise, I must state some circumstances in his history and character.

Lord Clermont then, was one of those who imagine they are thoroughly acquainted with human life, from having contemplated it on the dark side. Dis-
appointed

appointed in his expectations of preferment at court, he retired into the country, with somewhat of a saturnine cast of character; the asperity of which was not softened by the enjoyment of domestick happiness. His union with Lady Clermont was effected by interested motives, and as the badness of her temper, and the inferiority of her whole character, was a perpetual source of disquiet, he attributed his infelicity to his own folly, in marrying a woman whom he beheld with indifference; erroneously supposing, that if he had really loved her, her failings would have given him less pain. This predilection in favour of love-matches, strongly warring with his ruling passion, avarice, induced him to look forward with apprehension, to the period of his children arriving at maturity; for he supposed it improbable, that Cupid and Plutus could agree in their choice, and each of these deities seemed in his eye of equal importance. To prevent his children therefore from falling in love, he

educated them with strict severity, and railed at the passion with increasing violence, till his accidental interview with Marianne Dudley, and his son's visible attachment to her relieved his painful apprehensions, and changed his invectives into encomiums. Habitual severity prevented him from owning to Mr. Clermont the satisfaction he felt; but the young lover's impatience to lead his charmer to the altar, was hardly more violent than his father's desire effectually to secure him from the possibility of being attached to some beautiful beggar, or of sacrificing his future comforts at the shrine of unamiable riches.

The unfounded rumour respecting Mr. Dudley's intentions of restraining Marianne from marrying, had reached the Park; and Lord Clermont considered it as too probable to want authenticity. He esteemed it a very fortunate circumstance, that his son's acquaintance with the ladies had commenced during the father's absence; and, instead of restrain-

ing, encouraged his frequent visits to Stannadine, in order that he might secure the affections of Marianne, before any opposition could be started. His observations on her behaviour convinced him that his plan had so far succeeded, and he considered the compliment he paid her father in asking his assent, to be merely a step to bring the affair to a crisis. That assent, given with no other restriction than what his child's happiness seemed to demand, astonished his Lordship; but an adept in *the ways of the world* will not ascribe any action to the principle of disinterested virtue, which is capable of being referred to consummate hypocrisy.

Lord Clermont, on his return to the Park, sent for his son to his closet. The polished urbanity of manners, which distinguished this nobleman in company, did not enter into his domestick arrangements, and Mr. Clermont with reluctant steps obeyed the summons of a father, who, except in permitting his visits to Stannadine, had always appeared to com-

bat his wishes ; and who never called him to a private conference, but only to give him a pointed reproof. Even now that he had the most transporting tidings to communicate, he could not resolve to do it in a gracious manner. "Edward," said he, in a stern voice, "I wish to know if you have so far forgotten your duty as to engage your affections to Miss Marianne Dudley, without previously obtaining *my* permission." Conscious of the error, which he knew not how to vindicate, and could not disown, Mr. Clermont was silent. "I perceive," resumed his Lordship, "that my suspicions are just. I suppose, Sir, I have not deserved your confidence. I am an unnatural father, am I not ?" The poor youth, supposing the next sentence would contain a peremptory mandate to banish him from one on whom his life depended, and against whom no reasonable objection could be urged, could not give a negative reply to his father's interrogatories, and remained dumb with terror and confusion.

After

After his Lordship had thus gratified himself by the indulgence of parental power; he thought proper graciously to forgive him, and, after slightly mentioning Marianne's inferior rank, expressed his willingness to overlook *that* objection in consequence of her merit, and his desire to ensure his son's happiness. He then related what had passed between him and Mr. Dudley, and claimed the acknowledgment which duty and gratitude must excite, in return for such considerate goodness. Mr. Clermont in a transport of joy flung himself at his father's feet, and acknowledged that he had made him the happiest of men; and his Lordship, while he raised him and held him to his heart, experienced, for perhaps the *first* time in his life, the real blessing of being a father.

Nothing now remained but to gain the approbation of Lady Clermont, and to prevail upon the lovely maid to sanction their hopes. The former, my Lord was too much of a fashionable husband to consider as of much importance; and

the latter he was inclined to hope would not prove an Herculean labour.

CHAP. XXI.

A fair Platonist is compelled to marry, as a less hazardous expedient, than refining the opinions of an illiberal age.

THE lover's task of propitiating his Goddess was rendered less difficult by Mr. Dudley; who, immediately upon the departure of Lord Clermont, informed his daughter of the purport of that nobleman's visit, and requested her decision.

Marianne, with blushes as animated and as beautiful as those of the morning, expressed a lively sense of Mr. Clermont's merits; but though she felt for him a tender friendship and a warm esteem, she scarce supposed her regard amounted to love, a passion of which she believed her heart never would be susceptible.

Mr. Dudley, who thought otherwise, replied, "Where, my dear, did you learn
your

your opinion of love? If neither warm esteem nor tender friendship expresses the sentiments it inspires, by what other words can you define them?"

Marianne, a little piqued at having her knowledge of a science, in which she believed herself an adept, called in question, answered, that if she was convinced it would promote Mr. Clermont's happiness, she could cheerfully resign him to another."

"You only tell me, my dear, that you are not selfish, mean, and illiberal; qualities of which I never supposed you capable.

The young lady perceiving that she had considerably the disadvantage in the argument, begged her father to give her *his* opinion of her lover.

Tenderly pressing her hand, "I am certain," said he, "my dear child is not one of those who discover irresistible attractions in the splendor of a coronet, or the possession of immense wealth. I therefore will not consider that Mr. Cler-

mont's pretensions are by those advantages rendered irresistible. He appears to be an intelligent, agreeable young man, of a frank, candid disposition; and I am informed is irreproachable in his morals. As a lover, I presume he must be as much of an Amadis de Gaul, as modern manners will permit, and therefore certainly adapted to your taste in that particular."

Marianne smiled. "You are severe upon me, Sir, but is this all you have observed of him?"

"I could say," resumed Mr. Dudley, "that his character is not yet completely formed. He has been educated in retirement, under the eye of (if the world says right) a stern father. Such a situation, so secure from every temptation to do wrong, and precluded from the possibility of acting and judging for himself, obliges me to consider Mr. Clermont's future conduct to be rather a matter of opinion, than admitting of a positive conclusion. He is extremely young, lively,
and

and possessed of strong passions; for such an one the world will spread many snares, from which I sincerely hope his attachment to you may preserve him. Our sex, my dear, is formed to fill an ampler space in the world than yours, and the sphere of an English nobleman's actions is an extensive one. It is always fortunate for a woman, when she marries a man whose character can in some degree be ascertained, by his having been for some time under his own guidance. You who are formed to fulfil the retired, but not less important duties of life, can always be properly estimated while under the paternal wing; the attentive, submissive daughter, will make a tender, obliging wife; the retired, amiable maid, will form the prudent domestick matron. But the manners of the man cannot be so well determined by the virtues of the youth; particularly if his father, like Lord Clermont, assumes that method of behaviour, which indeed tries his patience and good humour, but does not eradicate

any wrong propensity, or call forth the latent qualities of his soul, by confidence and generous friendship. I must therefore upon the whole consider Mr. Clermont as a less eligible husband than Mr. Pelham."

Marianne entreated her father never to mention a name which she never heard without feeling dislike, bordering upon aversion. She then asked her father if patience and good humour were the only virtues he discovered in Mr. Clermont.

The fretful impatience with which she interdicted Mr. Dudley from mentioning *his* friend, and the tacit reproof her question conveyed, determined the observant father to suppress further observations; and endeavouring to give the conversation a lively turn, he told Marianne that patience and good humour were very good *connubial* virtues.

Still Marianne could not think of marriage, and wished that Mr. Clermont's sentiments coincided with her's, in preferring

ferring (for at least some years) the gentle tie of friendship.

"Will you tell me, my dear," said Mr. Dudley, "what the married state is, if it is not friendship in its most lively, extensive, and exalted sense? Is it not an union of interests and affections, sanctioned by an indissoluble tie? Does it not call for mutual esteem, confidence, forbearance and tenderness? Contemplate it, my dear, in the light of a connection at first designed by divine wisdom, for the mutual advantage of two fallible creatures, and not as a fairy region of ecstasy and perfect happiness, inhabited by perfect beings, whose every wish, sentiment, and action flows in unison. I would not shock your delicacy, Marianne; but I must tell you that the world is exceedingly apt to call in question the existence of that Platonick affection you seem to entertain; and I will apprize you, that it is necessary, either to receive Mr. Clermont's visits in the acknow-
B 6 ledged

ledged character of your lover, or to request him to discontinue them."

Marianne was exceedingly displeased at the world's want of candour, sentiment, and refinement; but as more expert reformers than herself had often in vain tried to correct its prejudices, she did not feel sufficient courage to dare its censures, and to despise its frowns. The compassion inseparable from her disposition, prevented her from adopting the last alternative proposed by her father; as its effects would inevitably prove fatal to poor Clermont. But while she hesitated, perplexed and unresolved, the over arrived to plead his own cause. His arguments, confirmed by a thousand vows of eternal gratitude, unremitting attention, unalterable, tender, inviolable love, were successful: and Marianne consented to accompany him to the altar.

CHAP. XXII.

The Author's predilection for declamation, induces her to make no use of a fine opportunity for introducing elegant description.

NO sooner had the lady's consent been obtained, than the Clermonts, as if fearful that she would retract it, urged on their suit with the additional request of a speedy union. My Lord, with the pettish impatience common to discontented people, would not believe that an event so agreeable to his wishes would take place, without the intervention of some mortifying circumstance to abate his satisfaction. His fears of Mr. Dudley's opposition being removed, by that gentleman's cheerful acquiescence, he adopted another set of apprehensions; and as he had discovered the perplexed state of the father's affairs, began to fear a marriage with the daughter might entail upon his son the protection and support of two beggars;

beggar; and to this he calculated Marianne's fortune was unequal.

A little time previous to his being certainly assured of Mr. Dudley's misfortunes, his Lordship in conversation gave a hint, which at least proved him to be a man of forecast, as it is generally termed. The purport of it was, that though Mrs. Alderson had thought proper to distinguish Marianne as her favourite, he hoped Mr. Dudley would still remember she was *his* daughter. Mr. Dudley not entering into the force of this suggestion, answered it by declarations of the affection he felt for such an amiable child; and in the warmth of paternal transport, repeated many instances of the tender attachment she had shewn to his person and attention to his interests; adding, that he could hardly have expected such regard considering that he had been separated from her in her early years, when the heart receives the most lively impressions. The deep discernment of Lord Clermont, reflecting afterwards upon these

these words, and comparing them with the state of Mr. Dudley's circumstances, led him to suspect that they conveyed more of design than of paternal tenderness; in other words, that he intended to take advantage of the filial virtue he commended; his Lordship therefore thought it right to take an opportunity of shewing him, that he would find some difficulties to impede his design.

The steady honour which was an inmate of Mr. Dudley's breast in every situation, anticipated his Lordship's cold prudence. On recollecting the conversation, he perceived, that "more was meant than met the ear;" and to prevent the expectations of avarice from exceeding their probable gratification, he determined, not only to inform Lord Clermont that Marianne's fortune had been limited to Mrs. Alderson's bounty, by express agreement when she and her sister were infants, but that in fact he had now nothing to bequeath. Determined to conquer false shame, since unconscious of intentional

intentional error, he frankly stated his alarming situation. My Lord heard him with much *sang froid*, his eyes fixed on a beautiful landscape of Claud's, which hung at the other end of the saloon. When Mr. Dudley had finished, he expressed great concern, but intermixed his consolations with reproofs for his misplaced confidence, declaring that he very well knew the instability of Tone-reau's credit a twelvemonth ago. He did not stop to hear Mr. Dudley exculpate himself, as he attempted to do by pleading, that they were old family friends, and that his long absence from England gave him less opportunity of knowing the state of mercantile credit than others: his Lordship went on in a very composed, careless manner, to ask how he meant to dispose of himself, and what were his future plans respecting his daughter.

"People of our age, my Lord," said Mr. Dudley, with a warmth he could not restrain, "may employ themselves better than in forming distant plans for the support

port of an existence they may almost hourly expect to resign. I felt misfortune at a time when I looked forward to many years, which hope had dressed in gay alluring colours: if I *then* sustained my trials with firmness, much more may I now, when experience has taught me the insufficiency and instability of temporal blessings; and when nature reminds me of a speedy summons from all sublunary prospects. With respect to Louisa, I am happy in seeing her possess a dignity and composure of mind, which will in any circumstances prevent her from sinking into despair. Both of us, my Lord, have independent spirits. We can neither solicit nor accept the cold assistance of reluctant friendship. Fortunately for her, her grandfather's prudence placed the means of procuring her the necessaries of life beyond the power of my indiscretion: and in all my troubles, I have the consolation to reflect, that the child, whom my folly injured, has the ability, as well as the

the virtue, to offer me an humble but secure asylum."

"Your numerous friends, Mr. Dudley, will doubtless prevent you from putting the young lady's filial piety to an inconvenient trial. I should, for instance, think my son would be extremely happy; but really there is no answering for young men; and people of quality are often embarrassed to support what the world expects from them. But suppose we mention the affair to Edward."

"By no means, my Lord. My expectations from Mr. Clermont extend no further than to his making my Marianne happy. In so doing, he will confer upon me a lasting obligation; and my heart is too proud to be easy under the sense of multiplied favours. Could I have submitted to become pensioner upon Marianne's bounty, I believe I could easily have taken advantage of the melting kindness of her temper; and by depriving her of the advantages she had a right to expect,

expect, have secured myself in affluence. But as I have taken no dishonourable step to secure myself from poverty, I trust I shall not want firmness to endure it."

Though Lord Clermont (practised in the ways of the world) was not inclined to place implicit confidence in declamatory integrity, the serene firmness which irradiated Mr. Dudley's countenance almost induced him to lament, that a man of such principles should be left the unassisted prey of misfortune. To do justice to his Lordship's benevolence, he really felt an inclination to stand forth as an active friend; a wish which like many of the desires human nature is apt to entertain, seemed to increase with the improbability of its completion. Upon the whole, he considered this conversation to be *very* satisfactory: a connection with a ruined man was not indeed desirable but when poverty was accompanied with the firm spirit of haughty independence it was infinitely less troublesome to its acquaintance and friends. The humane

humane might dare to express their sympathy; and the polite venture an offer of service, without any hazard of having appropriate services annexed to general expressions.

He therefore hurried on his son's nuptials with additional impatience, and Mr. Clermont seconded his solicitations with all the ardour of young romantick love. Marianne found her maidenly reluctance yield to the entreaties of such importunate suitors. Within a month from the time of Mr. Dudley's return, Mr. Clermont had the transport of hearing his blushing bride publickly confirm, with solemn vows, the tender assurances she had before given him of eternal love.

The younger part of my readers will doubtless expect a description of the nuptial ceremony, the bride's paraphernalia, and all the gay et cætera of a wedding; which often diverts the juvenile mind from reflecting upon the important duties this grand change in female life prescribes. I had proposed myself the
pleasure

pleasure of gratifying them in this particular ; but when these affairs came to be discussed in a grand committee-meeting of our society, convened at Danbury, for the express purpose of judging whether every thing was properly managed ; the whole proceedings appeared nothing but a chain of improprieties, and I therefore, think it better to omit a description which could only excite the painful duty of unfavourable criticism. Why should I tell the publick that *we* determined that the marriage was too private ; that the bride's clothes were ill fancied, and sat frightfully, or that the jewels laboured under the double disadvantage of being *horridly* extravagant, and *odiously* unbecoming ?

But one circumstance as connected with the historical part of my present labours I must not omit. It was the extreme plainness of the dress in which Miss Dudley accompanied her sister to the altar. Such meanness was so little consistent with the other circumstances of her character, that we found no difficulty

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culty in attributing it to the most malignant envy. The sagacity of this observation was confirmed by hearing, that instead of assisting at the ceremonial visitings, Louisa and her father set out for their estate in Lancashire a few days after the nuptial ceremony. Such a want of attention to even common decorum, excited all our philanthropy, and in proportion as we hated the partial father and his darling daughter, we wished all imaginable happiness to the poor young people, thus left to themselves without any prudent friend to direct them in family management. Unsolicited, and prompted only by our natural generosity, we resolved to take upon ourselves the *kind* office of general inquisitors into the conduct of Mrs. Clermont's family, and we accordingly assumed the self-invested character.

CHAP. XXIII.

The nuptial present of a Father.

AMONGST the arrangements preparatory to Mrs. Clermont's nuptials, it was determined that Mr. Dudley should immediately resign Stannadine to the young couple, for their residence; and Marianne acceded the more readily to her father's proposal, because she had lately heard him express an intention of accompanying Louisa to her Lancashire estate that autumn. It must be observed, that the train of thought in which the fair enthusiast had hitherto indulged, did not supply the most accurate ideas respecting real life. Though educated to enjoy all the elegant comforts of affluence, she did not know that competence was a blessing; and she would perhaps have declaimed against the narrow, illiberal mind that dared to reckon it amongst the prime ingredients in the cup of human

human happiness. She had too great a soul to enquire what the value and extent of her sister's estate was ; she had heard there was a cottage upon it, and that name suggested every thing that was pastoral and charming. Nothing but the society of her adored Clermont could have prevented her from envying the elegant retirement her father and sister were going to enjoy. At parting, she repeated her injunctions to Louisa, not to be so captivated with rural beauty, as to forget her promise of spending Christmas at Stannadine, and in the interim she was to be a punctual and diffuse correspondent. The charming scenes of artless nature could not fail to afford ample materials to a skilful hand ; the tender attachments of the nymphs and swains would throw living figures into the landscape ; and who knows but some new Palemon might present himself, with taste to select, and virtue to reward the new Lavinia.

Louisa, with a pensive smile, wished her sister a long continuance of her present happiness, while the starting tear seemed to indicate that she formed no very high idea of the rural felicity she herself was going to enjoy.

While Mr. Dudley, the evening previous to his departure, repeated the blessing he first pronounced on consigning his child to the protection of a husband; prudence suggested a few salutary precepts. "May I always, my dear Marianne, see in your countenance this delightful appearance of heartfelt satisfaction! But in order to preserve it, let me conjure you to banish from your heart that extreme sensibility you have hitherto cherished."

"My dear Sir," cried the astonished bride, "you advise me to dismiss the very faculty by which I know how to appreciate my present happiness. I owe to it the exquisite sense I have of Mr. Clermont's unremitting tenderness. To this lively sentiment I ascribe the ineffable
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delight his presence excites, and the refined transport which I feel at all his observant assiduous attentions. My dear father, do not think I can surrender a quality, which has taken the deepest root in my soul."

"I perceive," said Mr. Dudley, "that you are not yet a convert to my doctrines, that the lover and the husband are different characters; yet as my opinion is warranted by long observation, you will I am certain be convinced at last: I hope not painfully. Much of your future happiness, Marianne, depends upon yourself; do not at least err through principle. Many duties are interwoven with the sacred character which Mr. Clermont has lately assumed: he is no longer the enamoured youth, whom nothing unconnected with his fair Idol can interest; he is become the country gentleman, the neighbour, the landlord, the master of a family. With these obligations, though highly pleasing to an intelligent mind, many irksome duties are necessarily involved;
and

and when his temper is ruffled by any exterior perplexity, those assiduous, observant attentions which you say are the source of your refined transports, must appear to him as a disagreeable restraint. There is no part of the female character dearer to us men, than the idea that you are the soothers of our inquietudes, the solacers of our sorrow, the sympathizing friends to whom we may at all times retire for comfort, in every distress. The enthusiasm of youth often mingles with the addresses of the lover, an overstrained submission which places your sex in an exalted, but let me add in a false point of view. The husband, when he reflects coolly upon every circumstance, will, if he judges right, consider it better to preserve the heart he has gained, by displaying the manly qualities of sense, philanthropy, integrity, and fortitude, than by the lover-like arts which his juvenile affection urged him to adopt; and the discreet wife will hasten to elevate her own character, by adding to the delicate

tenderness of the bride, the dignified virtues of the matron.

“Exert the powers of your understanding, my dear child,” continued he, tenderly pressing her hand. “Even during the first fond period of wedded love, strengthen the bonds by which you hold Mr. Clermont’s heart, by displaying those mental excellencies, which will be ever new and valuable, when your person, your conversation, and your many fine accomplishments, shall have lost the gloss of novelty. Providence, by placing you in an affluent situation, has imposed upon you a thousand motives for exercising a benevolent heart; and by making you as it were a mark of distinction, enjoins that nice propriety of conduct, by which, if we cannot escape censure and sorrow, we are at least secure from the self-reproach of having deserved it. You are commanded to prepare yourself for a spiritual world, not to languish out life in luxurious softness. You may, like yonder glorious Orb now sinking in the West,

West, spread comfort and delight all around you, and become a noble spectacle both to men and angels. And will you give up all these privileges, to place your whole of happiness in the unremitting tenderness of a sincere, amiable, well-intentioned, but undoubtedly of a fallible being? No, my child, summon your resolution, and ere he changes the mode of behaviour his fondness has imposed, do you imperceptibly release him from the restraint. With pain I have heard you both declare, that you wish to shut out all the rest of the world, and to live only to yourselves. I must tell you that if this opinion was circulated, you would subject yourselves to much opprobrium, not to say disagreeable ridicule: but I will predict that your opinions will be changed before you are three months older."

Mrs. Clermont here interrupted her father. "You have formed your judgment, Sir, upon common attachments, and common marriages, and seem inclined to think that there are no exceptions from a general rule."

“I have formed my judgment,” resumed Mr. Dudley, “upon my thorough knowledge of your character, and all I have seen of Mr. Clermont’s; but I perceive my lecture wearies instead of convincing you. I will therefore conclude with two requests. I would wish to give them the efficacy of commands. In the first place, do not appear to avoid mixing in the society of your neighbours, and endeavour to engage Mr. Clermont in amusements, which will occasion frequent little absences. He will return to you with additional satisfaction, and your relish of each other’s society will be improved, by the occasional interruptions company will give. My second request is, that you will study your husband’s temper and character, with the deepest attention; in order that you may discover the peculiar tendency of those errors and prejudices, from which the best of us are not free, that by familiarizing them to your mind, they may steal upon you in the diminished form of little imperfections.

perfections. If you neglect to do this, you may perhaps first perceive them at a moment when passion has increased them beyond their usual magnitude; and your alarmed imagination may still further extend them, till they eclipse their neighbouring virtues. Besides, a wife's discretion may often guard her husband from an error, by knowing the peculiar temptation to which he is most liable. I have now done, and this, my child, is the only legacy I can bequeath you."

Reflections of the most poignant nature agitated Mr. Dudley, as he spoke the last words. Mrs. Clermont, with disinterested affection, thanked him for the valuable gift, and after assuring him it was all she wished for, she entreated him to consider Louisa as his *only* child in the disposal of his fortune. She then obliged him to repeat his promise of visiting Stannadine at Christmas. "You will then, my dear father," said she, "see how I am improved by your precepts, and how far I am a convert to your opinion."

CHAP. XXIV.

An attempt at local description. The Author sees something like an enchanted castle, in which she immures a fair Arcadian.

THE asylum which filial piety prepared for Mr. Dudley, was little calculated to banish from his memory the glowing fertility of the tropical islands; or the convenient elegance, with which well-regulated art had embellished Stanadine. The most enthusiastick imagination could hardly associate pastoral ideas with the neglected wildness of Seaton-dell, could suppose it peopled by Nais and Dryads, or fancy that Pan ever awoke its echoes with his tabor and pipe, while Cynthia and her maids of honour danced cotillions.

Little did Mr. Alderson think when he bequeathed this estate to his grand-daughter, as a supply for pin-money, that it would soon become her *only* permanent possession.

session. Much more improbable would it have appeared to his widow, could she have foreseen, when on her death-bed she requested that her old dairy-maid, Mary Arby, might be permitted to end her days in the farm-house, which she had for many years inhabited; that she was providing a companion for the intelligent, accomplished Louisa. But the vicissitudes of fortune have often afforded copious themes for declamatory astonishment.

Though Mrs. Arby had answered Miss Dudley's intimation of her design of coming to reside upon the farm, with an assurance that she should be proud to entertain young madam; she certainly did not feel any *real* satisfaction in the idea, that she was to be interrupted in the possession of a place, over which she had long reigned with paramount authority. Few young women accustomed to the elegance of refined life, would have been inclined to disturb her. The house was built at a period when the substantial and gloomy style of architecture was pre-

ferred to the convenient and cheerful plan. Before the front was placed a little square garden, surrounded by a cut hedge, and subdivided at right angles by an ornamented fence of yew. Behind the house was an orchard, terminated by a rookery, the trees of which appeared at least contemporary antiques with the dwelling they belonged to. On the left hand lay the farm-yard, and out-houses; and on the right the decayed village of Seatondell, many of whose inhabitants, allured by the superior comforts which a large manufacturing town in the neighbourhood afforded, had deserted their parental abodes. There now remained only a few opulent farmers, their labourers, and the curate of the parish; the latter of whom, after enjoying the mental luxury of literary conversation, in college society, during the early part of his life, had been confined for many years, to the dry discussions of haughty, illiberal ignorance; and the
painful

painful reflections of disappointed hope—
A pitiable but not uncommon situation!

The arrival of the Dudleys in a post-chaise, was such a novelty, that every inhabitant of Seatondell ran out of doors to gaze at the strangers. Mrs. Arby, trembling alike with infirmity and apprehension, unbarred the massy porch door, and led them into an antique stone hall. Anxious properly to perform the honours of the house, she attempted to place Mr. Dudley in the wicker arm chair, but unhappily in the hurry of politeness flung down a large flower-pot that decorated the open chimney, upon Louisa's clothes. That amiable girl, possessed of the true benevolence which can exert itself in trifling affairs, as well as upon important occasions, diverted the good woman's concern for the accident, by kind enquiries after her health, and recollections of the early kindnesses she had received from her, when she visited at her grand-mamma's in her childhood. By mentioning some articles of rural cookery, in

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which Mrs. Arby used to excel, she in a great degree re-assured her trembling diffidence, and sent her

“ With dispatchful looks in haste,

“ As one on hospitable thoughts intent,”

to make trial of her skill.

Miss Dudley now addressed her father, who sunk in the arm chair with his head resting upon his hand, his listless, unob-servant eyes fixed on the immense stone window-frames, which seemed rather to exclude than to admit the day. The deepening shades of evening added to the gloomy appearance, and increased the dejection of his too conscious heart. “ My dear Sir,” said Louisa, “ I find this place infinitely preferable to what I expected: a little paint and paper will enliven the house exceedingly, and when the yew ornaments are removed I shall be delighted with gratifying my taste for flowers in that neat little garden. We shall find both health and amusement in improving our farm in summer, and in winter,

winter, books and musick will afford a never-failing resource from chagrin. My dear father, do resume your wonted cheerfulness; you have often taught me resignation, let not the preceptor need instruction from the pupil."

Mr. Dudley, after gazing upon his daughter for a few moments with a look of delighted affection, excused his want of spirits as arising from the fatigue he felt from their long journey. Louisa hoped the depression which she also felt might be ascribable to the same cause;—they separated at an early hour.

Awakened by the clamour of the domestick poultry, Miss Dudley rose with the sun, and opened the casement of her chamber window, to take a view of the adjacent country. Her apartment fronted the orchard, a thick autumnal mist hung upon the horizon, but had the morning been more favourable, the trees would have effectually impeded her design; for they were crouded together with a profusion which entirely obstructed the

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the sight of any other object. She sat down, listening to the murmur of a distant rivulet, which by a natural association of ideas, recalled to her memory a beautiful cascade at Stannadine; near which she first beheld Mr. Pelham, when introduced by her father in the character of Marianne's lover. There are moments in which the firmest spirits yield to the pressure of calamity; and while Miss Dudley recollected the happy hours she had passed in the society of that amiable man, a tear of involuntary regret, and a spontaneous sigh, expressed how much she felt the contrast of her present situation.

She was roused from this reverie by the sound of footsteps under her window, and looking out perceived her father. Mr. Dudley, after passing a restless night, had left his apartment with the hope of diverting the reflections he knew not how to endure. His amiable daughter immediately banished from her thoughts the indulgence of her own peculiar sorrow,
and

and lifting her beautiful eyes to heaven, with meek solicitude implored the beneficent Author of Creation to assist her endeavours to restore tranquillity and self-satisfaction to one of the worthiest of human hearts.

To give efficacy to her prayers, and to confirm her exalted principles by calling them into action, she immediately joined her father, and with the winning sweetness of which she was absolute mistress, imperceptibly detached his thoughts from brooding upon irremediable misfortunes. She persuaded him to walk round her little demesne, and, with unfeigned transport, at length succeeded in reviving in his mind that passion for agricultural improvement to which he was naturally inclined. A party of labourers were soon set to work, to prepare the ground for plantations, which were to be so disposed, that ornament might unite with utility. Others were employed in clearing some waste land which could usefully be converted into arable. A third set were occupied

occupied in cleaning a large fish-pond, which through neglect had been nearly filled with earth, by which effort of industry Mr. Dudley proposed a double advantage of draining a morass and furnishing his table with an agreeable luxury. The orchard and garden underwent a complete metamorphosis, about two-thirds of the trees in the former were felled, and thus the cheerful rays of the sun were permitted to break in upon the green mouldering walls of the old mansion. The clipt hedge was in part removed, and a neat green paling substituted in its place, and the ornamental yew pillars were completely annihilated, to make room for a plantation of odoriferous shrubs. These alterations involved the Dudleys in some serious disputes with Mrs. Arby, who feeling all the local attachments age is apt to indulge, considered every object with which she had long been familiar, with a sort of sacred regard. Even the gloom and damp which had hung for many years upon her residence,

residence,

residence, seemed in her eyes a perfection, the loss of which nothing *new* could supply.

Doubtless all the antiquated Dryads of Seatondell, if any such there were, joined with Mrs. Arby in her regret; but amidst the general devastation, a large White Rose, which entirely overshadowed the dairy-window, was preserved with most religious care. A tender sentiment was united to the uncommon beauty and fertility of the plant to preserve it from destruction, for it had been set by Mrs. Dudley in her childhood. Her affectionate and grateful daughter, while she cleared it of its decaying branches, and with pious assiduity decorated the sod from whence it grew with

“ The rathe Primrose that forsaken dies,
“ The glowing Violet,
“ With Cowslips wan, that hang the pensive head,
“ And ev’ry flower that sad embroidery wears ;”

MILTON’S LYCIDAS:

Indulged the pleasing melancholy which a departed friend impresses upon the memory, when time has softened the agonies

agonies of grief into mild regret and pious resignation. The approach of winter had already begun to strip the branches of the rose-bush of their verdant honours; and Miss Dudley's thoughts were naturally led from the ravages of the season, to recollect the more terrible devastations of death. Her melancholy muse expressed this idea in the following elegiack sonnet :

TO A

ROSE BUSH,

PLANTED BY A DECEASED FRIEND.

Rob'd in the mantle of luxuriant spring,

To thee the village-nymphs for chaplets sue,

O'er thee the Bee extends his filmy wing,

Inhales thy sweets, and drinks thy nectar'd dew :
From his high throne the flaming lord of day

Pours on thy bursting germs his fervid pow'r,

While zephyr, pleas'd among thy leaves to play,

Casts thy soft fragrance on each meaner flow'r ;

Thy foliage shall again salute the skies,

Thou shalt not languish long in winter's gloom ;

But lifeless still thy honor'd planter lies,

The beams of summer cannot pierce the tomb :

Man, lord of all, beneath the reign of time,

Awaits perfection in a nobler clime.

CHAP. XXV.

Proving, that the creative power of the imagination may be employed in producing pleasure as well as pain.

THE superior excellence with which Miss Dudley adorned retirement, was not wholly confined to the duties of a daughter; her heart glowed with the purest flame of benevolence, nor could disappointment obscure, nor distress absorb the sacred radiance. The inhabitants of Seatondell certainly presented no very alluring qualities to a polished mind; but my heroine considering them in the light of fellow-creatures, discovered in the common nature she shared with them, an unalienable claim upon her to discharge all the social and charitable offices, which dependent and accountable man from "brother man requires." She was not restrained by observing that prejudice, malevolence, and calumny prevailed

prevailed even in this obscure retreat. She considered these hateful passions as the natural characteristicks of an ignorant mind and an unbridled temper, and she even conceived it possible to counteract their baleful effects, by exhibiting the contrary virtues in the most amiable point of view. - This hope was too romantick to be the *chief* motive which regulated her conduct, for she principally looked forward to the approbation of her own conscience, whose silent voice can best appreciate the effects of external circumstances.

By the most engaging affability of look and manner, Louisa conquered the dislike her wealthy neighbours had conceived against her, and induced them to visit the "fine lady," who was at first equally the object of their ridicule and abhorrence. My poor heroine soon perceived, that it would be a vain attempt to discuss any of the topicks of conversation of which she was mistress, and prudently assuming the learner, permitted her

her visitants to lead the discourse, and endeavoured to improve herself in the knowledge of local politicks, and rural œconomy. The matrons were all charmed by this modest humility; and the fair rustick belles perceiving nothing intimidating or haughty in her manner, endeavoured to acquire some hints respecting dress and behaviour, from the graceful stranger; and almost forgot their first idea, that she was come on purpose to ridicule and eclipse them.

Though Miss Dudley, instead of succeeding in her well meaning design, of healing the village animosities, was forced to listen to many a dull detail of wrongs and insults; yet she derived considerable advantages from the occasional sacrifice of an afternoon. She more clearly knew the value of candour and placability, by perceiving how necessary they were to tranquillity and self-satisfaction. From a tedious uninteresting conversation she returned with double avidity to her favourite amusements; her books, her needle,

needle, her musick, her garden, the society of her beloved father, and those active exertions of charity from which her limited purse could not wholly restrain her. Accustomed to œconomick attentions, she knew how to husband her bounty, and by adding to it her personal services to render a trifle valuable. She visited the sick, consoled the afflicted, instructed the ignorant, and reprov'd the idle. She founded a village-school, inspected its management, and distributed its rewards. She was not discouraged by the murmurs of caprice, mistake, or ingratitude, though they often interrupted her benevolent plans; for while her heart bore testimony to the rectitude of her intentions, it taught her to look for her reward in an approbation transcendently superior to the changeful plaudits of variable man.

No part of her conduct appeared more deserving of imitation than her behaviour to Mr. Waldon, the unfortunate Clergyman whom I before mentioned. He had
long

long been exposed to the supercilious neglect of ostentatious wealth, or the rude insults of conceited ignorance. Depressed by poverty, perplexed by the care of providing for a numerous family, and harassed by the unpleasant temper of his wife ; his mind sunk under the pressure of these accumulated evils, which his education had taught him to feel ; and though he continued faithfully to discharge his ministerial duties, he performed them with the mortified air of a self-denying anchorite, instead of the cheerful satisfaction of the christian pastor.

The Dudleys at their first arrival at Seatondell, conceived for him all the respect his character and sacred function deserved, and treated him with the most marked civility. Flattered by an attention to which he had been so little used, he endeavoured to revive his dejected spirits, and to recollect those agreeable talents which had lain buried in oblivion. His attachment to those who had recalled him to the sense of pleasure was extreme, and

his

his eager enjoyment of the long denied luxury of literary conversation led him frequently to their house ; where, solicitous to exhibit his mental acquirements, he anxiously sought to engage Mr. Dudley or his daughter upon some ingenious topick of discourse. They were too candid to call this conduct by the harsh terms of intrusion or pedantry. Louisa felt happy at being able to give him a moment's respite from chagrin. Far from indulging a jest at the expence of his quaint rusticity, or scholastick expressions ; they excused his failings, pitied his misfortunes, and esteemed his virtues.

Nor was Mrs. Arby exempt from the mild influence of Louisa's excellencies. Happily blending the mistress with the friend, and kindly allowing for the petulance and prejudice of age, she soon taught the old woman to consider the once dreaded arrival of her young lady as the greatest blessing she had known ; and to join in the general applause, which in spite of a few malevolent detractors
was

was bestowed upon such exemplary conduct.

Thus increasing the happiness of all around her, was it possible for Miss Dudley to be wretched? Could a liberal, reflecting mind avoid partaking of the felicity it imparted; or, at least, enjoying the pure satisfaction arising from the consciousness of having acted right? Yet sometimes, when alone, a tear would steal down her cheek. It was *not* called forth by recollecting the splendid establishment Sir William Milton had once offered, for that she had resigned without the least reluctance; but alas! Mr. Pelham was not quite forgotten, and his agreeable character appeared to greater advantage, when contrasted with the society in which she now supposed herself destined to spend her future life. Filial piety, fortitude, and female delicacy united to restrain the unavailing regret, and she never met her father but with a smile indicative of the most heartfelt satisfaction.

Mr. Dudley was *almost* persuaded that the ruin of his daughter's fortune had not materially affected her happiness, and the thought was a cordial to his depressed spirits. He looked forward indeed to Christmas with anxiety, because he intended, while Louisa was with her sister, to take a journey to London, and endeavour to collect the scattered remains of his fortune. In the mean time the hours did not pass uncomfortably away. The unusual mildness and serenity of the weather proved favourable to their rural occupations. The mornings were generally spent in the field, and the evenings enlivened by the perusal of some approved author. Our immortal Shakespear held a distinguished place amongst them, and it is probable it was his animated description of a winter, similarly beautiful, which suggested to Miss Dudley the following address to the one she spent at Seaton-dell.

SONNET TO WINTER.

Be crown'd with flow'rs, gay winter. From thy wing
 Shake the round-moulded hail and flaky snow,
 Bid from Aquarius' urn soft streamlets flow,
 And Pisces wanton in the warmth of spring :
 Say to the shiv'ring Twins, no longer bring
 Your tulips copy'd from th' aerial bow,
 Or paint the Roseat bud. Let tempests blow,
 And o'er the won'dring world my mantle fling :
 For still with Oberon Titania jars,
 And still the sullen Queen indignant flies,
 While Elfin squadrons who before these wars
 Led the successive seasons down the skies,
 Their charge deserting supplicate the stars
 To heal the ills that from contention rise.

CHAP. XXVI.

*The dawn of Connubial Felicity, with a word
 or two on the pleasure of tormenting.*

MY two preceding chapters were peculiarly adapted to those who feel the inconveniences arising from depressed circumstances, a disagreeable situation, or an unpleasant neighbourhood. It seemed a humane office to point out to them in-

dependent amusements, and comforts absolutely beyond the power of fortune. I now address to the favourites of the fickle Goddess a few intimations, that they should receive her bounty with gratitude, and use it with moderation; frequently comparing their situation with that of their neighbours, in order to induce them to meet with fortitude the little evils from which even the happiest human beings cannot be exempt. With fortitude, did I say? I want a term implying the most cheerful acquiescence; for considering the calamities to which our nature is subject, the trivial vexations of life are beneath our regard.

It may be remembered that Mrs. Clermont was left in the full possession of all the blessings the most flattering imagination can conceive. No sooner had her father and sister left Stannadine, than the happy pair agreed to devote one fortnight to the uninterrupted pleasure of each other's society. The congratulatory cards were therefore answered, with a hint that they
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did not at present receive company, and an invitation to go and spend a week at the Park was respectfully deferred.

For the honour of wedded love, it shall be mentioned, that they persevered in this resolution, though candour compels me to acknowledge, that before the expiration of *that* time the hours moved upon leaden pinions. As every adventitious aid to conversation was rejected by mutual agreement, the invincible power and eternal durability of Love, though illustrated by their own example, seemed, after frequent repetition, but a vapid topick. Mr. Clermont with some degree of pleasure recollected the amusement his pencil afforded, and his fair bride was more than once tempted to look over her nuptial ornaments, and to appropriate her several dresses to different occasions of grand display.

Meanwhile Lady Clermont, who had *reluctantly* left a very "high-lived party" at Brighthelmstone to be present at her son's nuptial, was dreadfully chagrined to be detained with her Lord for a longer

period than she at first proposed, and since decorum would not permit her to leave the country till the intended visit was over, she determined that her new daughter should deeply feel the mortification of which she had been the cause. It was not difficult for her Ladyship to endeavour to persuade herself to dislike a young woman, possessed of beauty, sweetness, and elegance; it was a character to which she could form no pretension, and naturally hated, because it eclipsed her own. She received the bride with the hauteur of affected superiority; her plebeian rank was considered by the high-born Lady Clermont as an indelible disgrace; and her ignorance of the fastidious niceties of etiquette which the great world requires, afforded an inexhaustible fund of raillery, for one who had long considered *such* knowledge to be the compendium of valuable science.

Mrs. Clermont had been accustomed from her earliest infancy to unremitting tenderness, and she was by nature peculiarly susceptible

susceptible of unkind treatment; it therefore cannot be wonderful that the dislike between the mother and daughter was reciprocal. But her ladyship's temper was too violent to permit her to confine her's to her own bosom. She nursed the detestable design of rendering her less amiable in the eyes of her impassioned husband; and unrestrained by the strong impatience visible in his countenance, whenever the idol of his soul was spoken of in terms short of admiration, she continued to point the most mortifying sarcasms against romantick attachments and first impressions, mixing her observations with those faint commendations of Marianne's beauty and simplicity, which might almost be termed implied censures.

Mr. Clermont's behaviour to his mother had always been distinguished by respectful attention, in part arising from gratitude for the marked preference she had shewn to him, and in part from pity at witnessing the unkind neglect she experienced from his father, and which had greatly contributed

to four a temper naturally unamiable. But his deference as a son was now put to a severe trial, and could scarcely resist the stronger feelings of offended love.

One day, after having been particularly piqued by his mother's invidious observations, he hastily retired to his wife's apartments, to lose the painful recollection, in her engaging sweetness. He found her in tears. The tears of beauty are interesting; its distresses inspire the heart with the warmest resentment; and Mr. Clermont had infinitely more of the knight-errant in his character than generally falls to the lot of a husband. He conjured her to disclose the cause; his tender solicitude, while it gave her heart the liveliest pleasure, considerably increased her tears; for Mrs. Clermont had not yet adopted her father's advice, of aspiring to that more exalted part of our sex's character, which teaches us to share in the sorrows of our husbands with magnanimity, and to teach them fortitude by our unobtrusive patience.

She

She was the "feeble vine," always clinging for support to "her wedded elm."

Sobbing with distress, which seemed rather to proceed from weakness than from any real affliction, she at length answered his importunities, by confessing that her tears proceeded from lady Clermont's unkind behaviour. But when she found that she had excited a tempest which all her skill could not allay, she deeply regretted the imprudent discovery. Mr. Clermont burst from her in a rage and hastened to his mother. A most violent altercation ensued between them, in which they mutually seemed to forget what was due to the sacred ties of blood. Lord Clermont's authority, and the gentle mediation of his daughter, produced an *apparent* reconciliation; but the seeds of disgust were deeply sown, and in their final effect were ruinous to Mr. Clermont's peace.

During the remainder of the visit, her Ladyship behaved to the bride with ceremonious coolness and affected respect.

This behaviour, though less reprehensible than the former, was equally painful to a candid ingenuous mind. Marianne deeply reflected upon the preceding events, and though there was nothing in her husband's behaviour which could be construed into an implied censure upon her conduct; her conscious heart told her it had not been worthy his esteem. She had been apprized of Lady Clermont's bad temper, and the little influence she possessed in her family was publickly known. It was absurd to expect to be exempt from the general influence of constitutional ill humour, and cruel to degrade and expose an unhappy woman, who already laboured under the severe affliction of a husband's contempt.

On discovering her past indiscretion, Mrs. Clermont fell into an error not uncommon to a generous susceptible heart. Prompted by a keen sense of her fault, she determined to apply to Lady Clermont for forgiveness; and had the application been made with prudence, or
had

had the person to whom it was addressed, possessed but half the generosity of herself, the most happy effects might have been produced. But in the letter she wrote, (for she had not courage to name her offence in conversation,) she proportioned her concessions, rather to the acuteness of her own feelings, than to the enormity of the fault, which was in reality nothing more than an irritable sense of undeserved provocations. This letter afforded the malevolent Lady Clermont the liveliest satisfaction. It convinced her of her power to distress a placable susceptible mind, and she preserved it with care to be produced as an uncontrovertible evidence, against her daughter, on any future occasion. Her reply was dictated by great apparent kindness and ostentatious urbanity.

CHAP. XXVII.

A fête champêtre. Excessive tenderness is sometimes troublesome.

SOON after the Clermonts returned to Stannadine, the congratulatory visitings commenced. Our society was unusually animated, by the exhilarating entertainment of anecdote and observation which this circumstance supplied. As I have already anticipated the general conclusions, and hate repetitions, I shall hasten to the description of a grand fête given by Mr. Clermont, to the inhabitants of Danbury; for, in compliance with his father's wishes, he had formed a parliamentary design upon our ancient respectable borough.

The entertainment consisted of a ball and supper, given in the gardens; in which such of the company who chose might appear in an assumed character. The bride arranged the plan of the entertainment,

tainment, and perhaps felt a secret pleasure, that the superior elegance of her taste had now an opportunity of publicly displaying itself. Every ornament was perfectly rural, and the whole proceedings were adjusted with pastoral simplicity. In the attire of Calypso she presided as mistress of the feast, and welcomed her guests to her bower with an air of inimitable sweetness. Her Ulysses hung with enamoured eyes upon his fair enchantress, and forgot his father's senatorial projects: unlike his old archetype, who only remembered Ithaca, even when first infatuated by the Queen of Ogygia.

The company afforded a great display of character, but not all strictly classical. Captain Target, with his head dressed à la Pigeon, a chapeau under his arm, and a sword, exhibited a tolerable *modern* Mars. Miss Cardamum happily returned from Scarborough in time for this festivity; rich in polite anecdote, and gaily decorated by fashion. She treated us with a very lively Diana, in a pink farsenet jacket:

jacket: while Miss Dolly Medium displayed as happy an imitation of Venus, in a white frock altered into a Grecian symar for the occasion. For my own part, I was contented with the simple, unambitious character of a shepherdess, and put myself to no further expence than a few blue ribbands, with which I metamorphosed my walking cane into a crook.

I thought the evening extremely agreeable, and returned home perfectly satisfied; but my unfortunate facility in being pleased, exposes me to many inconveniences, and frequently obliges me to retract the applause which is controverted by better judges. It was determined in full consistory, that the lights were ill disposed, the ornaments childish, the refreshments parsimoniously supplied, and the bride and bridegroom visibly too much attached to each other, to pay proper attention to their friends. But what was most lamentable, so little regard had been paid to proper arrangement, with
respect

respect to the dancers, that the Captain and Miss Dolly were placed below Mr. Inkle and Miss Allbut, the common brewer's daughter. This might indeed be the effect of chance, but such misfortunes must be expected from the heterogeneous mixture jumbled together on this occasion. It was undoubtedly an insult to the Danbury patricians, to invite *them* on the same evening with their plebeian neighbours, and a breach of the etiquette, their present member, Lord Grimbly always observed. As the Clermonts were *young* people, it certainly proceeded from ignorance, but then a friendly hint should be given, that such improprieties may be avoided in future.

As these observations were not whispered in closets, they were detailed to Mrs. Patty, when she paid an *extraordinary* visit to Miss Lappel's in order to learn what was said of the entertainment. As, in the opinion of the sanguine Abigail, it had been a complete piece of perfection she had anticipated the high encomiums which

which would be passed upon her lady; and by implication upon herself, as a most able assistant in producing the happy effect. Judge then of her astonishment to find it had been voted an absolute *bore*. Mrs. Patty's tongue was not deficient in the grace of volubility, and she certainly poured upon the calumniator's a torrent of what might be termed retributive abuse; but when we expect a penegyrick upon *ourselves*, to meet only an opportunity of abusing *others*, is certainly a mortification. I can compare it to nothing but what a Roman general must feel who was only permitted an ovation, when he expected a triumph.

Patty's anger was too violent to evaporate in defamation at Miss Lappel's and she seized the first opportunity to inform her lady what her enemies said of her. Whenever my fair readers are threatened with a similar communication, I will entreat them, for the sake of their future peace of mind, to repress the imprudence of rising curiosity, and to silence
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the injudicious or perhaps malevolent informer. Mrs. Clermont did not exert this useful self-command, and Patty was too fond of using the acid in her mental stimulants to adhere rigidly to truth. She *aggravated* therefore the *aggravations* which Miss Lappel, through her indignation at the ill usage of so good a customer, had already supplied; and thus the Danbury critique upon Mrs. Clermont's fête champêtre became at last a most highly coloured lampoon; capable of agitating a firmer mind than the fair entertainer possessed. How extremely hard it was to be disappointed, in her first attempt at gaining popularity! To be so *unexpectedly* disappointed too, rendered it still more provoking; for every one of her guests had declared themselves quite enchanted during the whole evening. One satisfaction still remained,—the sympathy of an affectionate husband. She had made the entertainment on purpose to oblige him, and doubtless he would warmly espouse her cause against a malevolent

volent *world*. Her quarrel indeed was only with a very small part of the universe; but injured people are fond of using indefinite terms.

It was at an inauspicious moment that Marianne flew to impart to her dear protector the cruel injuries she had received. Mr. Clermont had employed the whole morning in attempting to sketch a likeness of the sweet Calypso, who had so enchanted him a few evenings before. After many unsuccessful attempts, he at last executed a very promising outline; but whilst he was bending over it, with the mingled exultation of an artist and a lover, a favourite spaniel rushed into the room, and in its ecstasy at the sight of his master, leaped upon the pallet, and entirely obliterated the unfortunate performance.

Mr. Clermont had ever borne his father's peremptory behaviour and his mother's caprice with submission and deference. But the mandates of his Lordship, issued in the compulsory tone
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of a despotick monarch, and received with silent awe, were not calculated to eradicate any evil propensity, nor to inculcate any generous virtue. Fortunately his son had received from nature an amiable affectionate disposition; and his uncorrupted mind, elevated by a fertile imagination, and the strong enthusiasm of early youth, gave a romantick, but engaging turn to his character. From nature too he received as foils to his virtues, impetuous passions, and vehemence of temper; and these errors no paternal *precept* taught him to subdue; nor did the yet surer rule of paternal *example* inculcate the important duty of self-command. The restraint which the presence of his parents imposed was temporary, and his violence was still more apparent when that curb was removed.

On opening the door of the library, Mrs. Clermont surprized her husband in the first paroxysms of anger; correcting the trembling dog. Though her presence had always used to harmonize his soul

it rather added to his vexation on this occasion. He wished to have concealed from his Marianne every defect in his own disposition. He felt the resentment which rises in the mind of persons conscious of error; a resentment at first extremely apt to fall upon those who happen to witness the fault, instead of pointing the reproof to their own bosoms. To her terrified enquiries as to the cause of his violence, he remained for some time silent, and at last *complained* that she had interrupted him, when he was most particularly engaged. Mrs. Clermont immediately withdrew. Her spirits had been previously agitated by Patty's gossiping communications; this was the first time she had ever seen the "God of her Idolatry" in a light that obscured his supposed divinity. What a discovery for one who measured the virtues and the vices by a gigantick standard! She reached her dressing-room, and, sinking into a chair fell into strong hystericks.

Her

Her screams instantly alarmed her family, and Mr. Clermont was the first to fly to her assistance. His heart was candid and affectionate, and soon penetrated by remorse. He had corrected his dog for obliterating the portrait; but he had himself cruelly discomposed the charming original. In the lively pangs of compunction, he flung himself at her feet; terrified at the apprehension of her danger, he implored her forgiveness, and styled himself the basest of villains. No pungent aromattick could boast the reviving power which his voice possessed; his gentle bride, with sobbing tenderness, assured him of her forgiveness; but her delicate frame had been too much affected by the accuteness of her sensibility, immediately to recover from the shock it had received. Mr. Clermont attended her with the most watchful solicitude; intreaties for pardon, and assurances that it had been long ago granted, were repeated ever minute; and if this unlucky incident could be termed the quarrel of lovers,

it certainly confirmed the proverb, by proving the "renewal of love."

The lady's indisposition necessarily obliged some of the servants to be present during the eclaircissement; and as uneducated minds are ever apt to suspect more than they know, and to exaggerate what they really see, the circumstance was soon published, in a manner not very favourable to the wedded pair. My sagacious neighbours entered deeply into the dispute, and seemed willing to allow Mr. Clermont entire possession of the epithet of "basest of villains," which he had been pleased to affix to his own character. Indeed, general report brought no instance to confirm this *unqualified* abuse; but will candour permit us to question the veracity of voluntary confession? Our inquisitors-general, after bitterly inveighing against the guilt of hypocrisy in a young person, resolved upon a *permanent sitting* to discover the latent depravity, which they were certain must exist. And they executed this task with a degree of watch-

fulness that would have done honour to Argus himself; who perhaps was the mythological emblem of our sisterhood.

CHAP. XXVIII.

In wedlock, characters may be too similar to produce harmony. This axiom is proved by a well fought battle between female weakness, and male folly.

WHILE pity sang the plaintive dirge over the misfortunes of "poor Mrs. Clermont," that lady had entirely recovered from her indisposition; and fully confiding in her husband's assurance, that she should never behold the *smallest* error in his temper and conduct again, she yielded to the transporting reflections, which the expected arrival of her dear Eliza Milton had excited. Several months had elapsed since the friends had enjoyed the gratification of a personal intercourse, and though the important events which had taken place in that period had been described

described by a very diffuse pen; yet, many circumstances would admit of further amplification, in which art both ladies were adepts.

As I cannot conceive that it could be from the want of a proper relish for the beauties of female conversation, that Mr. Clermont was not constantly of the party, I will ascribe his absence to his commendable wish to gratify the fair friends with opportunities of indulging the confidence they so highly relished. Delicacies are apt to satiate the appetite, and to produce such a whimsical craving after novelty, as to render the coarsest food palatable. The most luxurious Epicures sometimes prescribe to themselves abstinence, in order to excite the greater relish for an expected dainty. Judging by these rules, Mr. Clermont invited a party of young friends to Stannadine, very soon after Miss Milton's arrival. They had all been his companions at school as well as at College, and their society had been productive of a thousand pleasures, before

despotick

despotick love became the "master passion in his breast," and "swallowed up" every competitor.

The foils who were thus introduced as a contrast to female *softness* were men of fortune, animated by youth and lively spirits, and exceedingly disposed to enjoy themselves with their old friend. They beheld his happiness with that sort of good-humoured envy, which warm admiration is apt to inspire, and which, though it desires as fortunate a lot for itself, has no malevolent wish to lessen the felicity of another. "Where did you meet with such an angel, Clermont?" was the general exclamation; and the epithets "Lucky dog!" and "Happy fellow!" were interrupted by many hearty shakes of the hand, and wishes of long life and uninterrupted harmony. I could here moralize upon the instability of human wishes.

The young gentlemen were all passionately fond of field sports; it was the season for enjoying them, and the surrounding

country was favourable to their desires. The restless humour of their sex soon made them weary of sedentary amusements; one proposed hunting, another shooting, a third coursing; but Mrs. Clermont's tender disposition supplied her with very strong objections to all the three diversions, and she looked with so much horror upon the cruel nature of these sports, as almost to detest those who practised them. She defended the cause of the dumb creation, with all the irresistible graces of plaintive oratory; and as her insinuating countenance, no less than her words, was peculiarly adapted to soften the hearts of her opponents, the majority seemed more than half convinced, and inclined to give up their darling pursuit. But one of the young Acteons, (by name Aubrey,) possessing more humour than implicit deference, encountered the fair pleader with a great share of agreeable vivacity, at the moment that her triumph was going to be acknowledged. He gayly ascribed the commiseration the ladies,

ladies generally expressed for the sufferings of animals of chase, to sympathy, arising from the recollection of their own terrors, while exposed to the persecutions of the grand *pursuer* Man. He cautioned them against the dangerous, though generous design, of diverting the *whole* attention of that mischievous creature from other objects of prey, to themselves; and he illustrated his argument with so many whimsical ideas that a loud laugh announced his victory. Neither Mrs. Clermont, nor her echo Miss Milton, dared to oppose their lively antagonist, and a shooting party was fixed for the next morning, to which Mr. Clermont was prevailed on to accede, though he had in reality no relish for the sport.

The company had no sooner retired than Mrs. Clermont began to exert her influence to detach her husband from what she termed an *inhuman* diversion. Certainly shooting could appear no better, when her lively imagination had embellished the terror of the poor birds which

had escaped, the misery of such as were wounded, the anguish of the dying and the grief of the survivors. Mr. Clermont heartily wished he could have retracted his promise; but as it had been given, thought he must adhere to it. His lady had now a new cause for dissuasion. Accidents often happened with guns, and as nothing but his staying at home would pacify her, he at length acquiesced; but so unwillingly, that he spent the remainder of the night in anticipating the awkward appearance he should make to his expecting friends in the morning. This apprehension was not ill-founded; the apologies he had framed were too jejune to be admitted; the real cause of his absenting himself was instantly guessed, and a loud laugh excited; which Mr. Clermont affected to parry with great bravery.

A jest upon the subject of female usurpation is dreadfully grating to lordly man, and it is peculiarly so when (as in the present instance) it happens to apply.

Mr.

Mr. Clermont declined his lady's invitation to breakfast, and as soon as his friends had set off, retired to his library, and there continued to pace the room with desultory steps; frequently imagining he had caught a glimpse of the chains which Hymen is *suspected* to wear under his long saffron mantle.

Respecting the real existence of these said chains, I, as an old maid, must not be allowed to give any decided opinion; but as the very apprehension of them has been known to drive many of the "Lords of the creation" frantick, I constantly advise my newly-married friends to endeavour as much as possible to divert their husbands' attention from this terrible bugbear. I intreat them to hold the reins of government (if by great chance committed to their hands) with circumspect propriety, and to surrender them the moment that the possession of them becomes disputed.

Dinner summoned the party again together. The young sportsmen, delighted
E 3 with

with the pleasures they had enjoyed, were in most excellent spirits ; but the fretful vexation which appeared in Mr. Clermont's look and manner effectually suppressed the indulgence of genuine mirth. A forced conversation was faintly supported, and the ladies soon withdrew. The bottle then began more freely to circulate, and Mr. Clermont's chagrin was not proof to the general hilarity it inspired. Old school exploits were then recollected with infinite satisfaction, and the classical enjoyments which College had produced lost none of their attack zelt by repetition. In short, mirth and good-humour were completely re-established in the dining-room.

Mrs. Clermont was in the mean time indulging in a luxury, of which I would prescribe a most temperate use to all young wives : I mean, the dangerous pleasure of unreserved confidence, with what is termed a *bosom* friend. The ruin of wedded peace may often be ascribed to such injudicious communications. To what purpose

purpose is it to talk over an husband's errors, or the little vexations which may be casually endured from him, unless to quicken our sensibility, to keep our minds and our tempers in a painful irritable state, and to prevent that happy forgetfulness which is in many instances the greatest blessing we can enjoy.

Mr. Clermont's ill-humour was too apparent to escape Miss Milton's observation, and Marianne's streaming tears evinced her painful sense of it. Encouraged by the pleasing sympathy of her friend, she indiscreetly related every little incident which had before occurred of a disagreeable nature; and the adventure in the library was largely discussed, together with Mr. Clermont's anxiety at her illness, and his solemn promises of never again giving way to ill-humour. Instead of considering a breach of that engagement as a constitutional defect, or a transient forgetfulness, and therefore but a venial error, Miss Milton aggravated it into wanton perjury and consummate cruelty.

cruelty. She had no malevolent design in so doing, but she had never made any observations upon real life; and Mr. Clermont's present behaviour was certainly very opposite to the perfect excellence and perfect felicity which exists in the land of Hymen;—as described in the Utopian geography of many modern novelists.

“Ah, my dearest Marianne,” cried the affectionate but imprudent Miss Milton, “are you indeed united to a lordly spirit insensible to the value of your lovely tenderness, your charming sensibility? I observed you at table, and felt astonished that Mr. Clermont could resist the soft complaining anguish that appeared in your countenance. Hark!—No, I am not mistaken, the gentlemen are extremely lively now. They can enjoy themselves as soon as the restraint which we imposed is removed. Good Heaven! and have I lived to see my Marianne an impediment to her husband's happiness?”

“My

“My father’s cautions,” resumed Mrs. Clermont, “pointed out to me all these evils; but I did hope that Mr. Clermont would prove an exception to the general rule. Too plainly do I discover that my society has lost its wonted fascination. Alas! my heart will ever be unalterably his, even if he continues to treat me injuriously.”

Here a sudden interruption prevented her from proceeding, and gives me an opportunity of closing my chapter.

CHAP. XXIX.

The consequence of a confident's interference, when unrestrained by discretion.

MR. Clermont and his friends rose from table in high spirits, and proceeded to the drawing-room in the gay hope of spending a pleasant evening. The first object they beheld was Mrs. Clermont rising from the sofa, and loosening her

E 5 hands

hands from Miss Milton's; her eyes red and swollen, and her cheek wet with tears.

Confused, surprised, and perhaps secretly ashamed of a weakness she had not time to conceal she could only answer the general enquiry of what was the matter, with a complaint of indisposition; and seizing her friend's arm, hurried to her apartment. Mr. Clermont followed, full of real anxiety, but when he tenderly enquired into the nature of her complaint, she only answered him with a soft sigh, and a request that he would not distress her.

Lady G. (in Sir Charles Grandison) complains, that mediators and mediatrixes had extended her whimsical disputes with her lord, and given them a more serious aspect than she designed. There can be no doubt that the present fracas between our young people would have terminated as easily at the last, if Miss Milton had not been seized with the warm Knight-errantry of friendship. Conceiving that the timid Marianne wanted an orator to
open

open her cause, she informed Mr. Clermont that his wife's uneasiness had proceeded from his evident ill-humour, and she requested him to consider what kind of treatment gentleness and sensibility required.

To borrow a phrase from the vocabulary of Bacchus, Mr. Clermont was a little elevated, and consequently felt the high dignity of man too warmly to submit to reproof. "Does Mrs. Clermont, Madam," said he, "appoint you the judge of my behaviour?" Then turning to his lady, he desired her for her *own* sake to behave with more propriety, and then humming a favourite tune, he rejoined his companions.

Neither my hero nor my heroine were models of prudence. Mr. Clermont's renewed vexation was strongly written in his face, and he was too much agitated to evade his friends' enquiries. They were quite in a disposition to enjoy *fun*, without retaining sufficient judgment to distinguish humour from mischief. A grand

rebellion against female influence was resolved upon, and as such projects always succeed best when reason is entirely banished, they all determined to spend the evening in high jolity; and to call in Champaign and Burgundy as glorious auxiliaries, for the supporting of male authority, and for humbling a wife's spirit.

As Mr. Clermont's heart, in spite of his resentment, could not be wholly alienated from his Marianne, he was the first to quicken the circulation of the glass, in order to silence the reproaches which he could not endure. The hours of night flew rapidly away, enlivened by what the gentlemen called Anacreontick sallies. About twelve o'clock, Mrs. Clermont dispatched request to speak with her husband; but the general voice chorused his answer, that he was particularly engaged and could not leave his party till the morning.

If the gay Bacchanalians perceived the "broad pinions of time swifter than the wind;"

wind ;" to poor Mrs. Clermont he appeared "to creep decrepid with old age." Unkindness must ever fall with severest weight on those who have ever been accustomed to extreme indulgence. Miss Milton's interposition had indeed been able to aggravate a trivial vexation into a real sorrow, but it was utterly incapable of healing the anguish a tender mind endured, while labouring under the *known* displeasure of a beloved husband.

Mrs Clermont flung herself upon the bed pretending sleepiness, but in reality to escape from the impertinence of consolation ; which administered no relief to her agonized heart. Her anxious friend insisted upon watching her slumbers, and positively refused to quit her chamber. This fond attention, contrasted with Mr. Clermont's cruel neglect, rendered the latter but more apparent, and fixed another dagger in Marianne's breast. Besides, her faithful Patty believing her lady to be asleep, began a conversation in audible
whispers

whispers with Miss Milton, of which the following was the prefatory speech.

"Pray, Madam, what can be the matter between my master and my lady? though I always thought they would soon fall out, for Miss Lappel has told me, that all the people in Danbury say, Mr. Clermont is the greatest villain in the world."

"Hush!" said Miss Milton, "so I am afraid; but don't let your lady hear you for the world."

"O," replied Patty, "she is fast asleep. 'Tis a shocking thing, Madam, that she should be *so* married. The sweetest, best tempered creature in the world."

"It is indeed, a fatal engagement," said Mrs. Clermont to herself, but her desire to hear more kept her silent.

"Pray, Mrs. Patty, do you know how this match was brought about?" enquired Miss Milton.

"It was my old Lord's doings, madam. To be sure there must be a fate in these things. Perhaps they wanted money at the Park; but I think it was not so
3 neither.

neither. Mr. Clermont never let my lady have any rest; teaze, teaze; but such hot love is generally soon cold, as the saying is."

"Not always so," returned Miss Milton, "but only with such ungrateful wretches as he."

"Wretches indeed, Madam. Well, to be sure, you only say what all the world does of him."

Here Mrs. Clermont's agony could no longer be suppressed. She fell into violent fits, and it was at this period that the message was sent to Mr. Clermont and the answer returned, which I have before, stated. The footman was again dispatched to say that his lady was extremely ill; but he judging his master's presence, in the state he then was, could afford no consolation, brought for answer that Mr. Clermont was extremely sorry, but really was unable to attend her.

CHAP. XXX.

Human passions, like the sea, vary from tempests to sullen calms

THE night passed in scenes of distraction; I shall now usher in the morning.

Mrs. Clermont, exhausted by her strong emotions, sunk into a slumber, in which she had continued a few hours, when Mr. Clermont and his friends awoke. A confused recollection of what had passed, mingled with much secret compunction; for the delights of intemperance will never stand the test of returning reason.

The visitants, on being informed that Mrs. Clermont was exceedingly indisposed, judged that their remaining longer at Stannadine would be a great impropriety; and desirous to remedy as far as possible the evil they had caused, at taking leave of Mr. Clermont, strongly urged him to an immediate reconciliation with his lady. Shocked at the idea that the world should know

know

know that he and his beloved Marianne were at variance, he sat agitated by the most sensible regret, which his friends strove to diminish, by softening his offence into a *venial* failing.

The moment their carriages drove off, Mr. Clermont went into his wife's apartment; but not with that lively transport which is expressive of the happy husband. She had just risen from her bed, and, did I indulge myself in the use of similes, I might now justly apply the trite one, of a broken lily wet with rain. Her pale, dejected aspect heightened in Mr. Clermont's mind the tender sensibility which resentment and inebriety had obscured: he folded her in his arms, and with impassioned agony besought her to forgive him. Mrs. Clermont assured him that she did, but her averted eye, and half-stifled sobs gave no pleasing confirmation to her words.

Mr. Clermont walked to the window mortified and dejected. Undoubtedly he was too arrogant in expecting his recent
provoca-

provocations could be immediately forgotten, and himself received with a complacent smile. I am, however, afraid that the generality of husbands, from the high idea they entertain of their own superiority, would be apt to think a wife very capricious who should retain her resentment after they have made the *slightest* concession. Men are remarkably tenacious of their opinions, and since protracting a domestick quarrel must always be at the hazard of future happiness, I must advise my sex to be "easily entreated." I can assure them that a placid smile will convey a very forcible reproof to a generous heart conscious of error, and that forgiveness is not the *less* valuable because it is cheerfully bestowed.

After a moment's hesitation, Mr. Clermont determined upon another effect; "You have been ill, my dear," said he, "I hope you are better." A faint affirmative was the only reply. "I conjure you, Marianne, by all our former happiness, do not treat me with indifference.

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I feel more compunction than I can express when I recollect the past; but let this acknowledgement suffice. Banish the events of yesterday from your remembrance. Give me your hand, and promise to think of them no more." She coldly gave her hand, and with a forced smile uttered the desired promise.

Though it would be very entertaining to a professed gossip, to follow our young couple's proceedings in a journal-like narrative, the apprehension of not meeting with the congenial soul of a sister-gossip in my readers, imposes brevity. The Clermonts continued to behave to each other for some weeks with civility instead of tenderness, and with attention instead of confidence and harmony. The conversation she had overheard between Miss Milton and Patty, cruelly agitated *her* mind, and induced her to view all her husband's actions with the askance eye of suspicion; while her knowledge of the violence of his temper imposed a sort of terrified compliance. Mr. Clermont, on
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the contrary, attributed his Marianne's melancholy reserve to an implacable disposition, and feeling unwilling to gratify her pride by any further submission, he permitted his attachment for his once adored idol insensibly to decline.

After having for some time silently endured the agonizing terror, which the fear of an husband's unworthiness must excite in an ingenuous heart, Mrs. Clermont unfortunately resolved to disburden her mind, by confessing to Miss Milton that she had overheard the conversation, between her and Patty. That lady candidly acknowledged that the violent epithets she had used against Mr. Clermont, proceeded from her lively interest in her friend's sufferings, and not from her knowledge of any secret depravity. "But," added she, "I am afraid your maid can give you further information."

"Will my enquiries be justifiable, and to what purpose will they tend?" resumed Mrs. Clermont.

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“They will at least relieve the anguish of suspense, and if he appears innocent, your harmony will be in some degree restored; if the contrary, you will have the comfort of knowing the worst, and the sooner you are separated from a depraved husband—”

“Separated!”—exclaimed Mrs. Clermont, turning pale with terror “for Heaven’s sake, Eliza, how could you suggest such an horrid idea? You little know with what passionate attachment my heart is irrevocably his. But let us change the subject, for I will make no enquiries that may lead to such a horrid catastrophe.”

“Act, as you judge best,” returned Miss Milton; “I have only mentioned what an attachment like that you express would urge *me* to do. I confess, uncertainty seems to me the most dreadful of all conditions; and recollect, my dear, that the event you shudder at, is at all times optionable, and not the certain consequence of your endeavouring to re-assure your mind.”

To this falacious reasoning, Mrs Clermont weakly yielded her "better judgment," and Patty was applied to for further information. Mr. Clermont's behaviour had been so truly inoffensive in every respect, but in the instances I have detailed, that Patty had nothing new to communicate; but out of her great zeal to make her lady *easy*, she undertook the office of spy upon her master's conduct, and opened an indirect communication with the Danbury inspectors.

Nothing however could be procured but petty detractions and general invective; so evidently the result of malice as to be even in *Patty's* opinion undeserving of repetition. During the course of these enquiries, Miss Milton terminated her visit; Mr. Clermont's mind was still so little in unison with his Marianne's, that he rejoiced at the departure of a person, who he perceived was honoured with that confidence and those marks of affection which he believed to be exclusively his right,

tright, while she bitterly regretted the absence of her dear companion.

The happiness of the Clermonts soon assumed a more favourable appearance. The indefatigable Patty could hear nothing that was of sufficient importance to disturb it, and her lady indulged the hope that the expressions which had so deeply disturbed her mind, were only "unweighed words," or thoughtless repetitions of the vague calumnies of envy and malevolence. She and Mr. Clermont equally felt the pain of discord, and they began insensibly to reassume the tender affectionate behaviour which had endeared the early hours of their union; when this fair promise of felicity was interrupted by an unfortunate incident.

CHAP. XXXI.

*Very palatable to the Lords of the Creation,
as it exhibits them in the possession of
plenitude of Power.*

IN compliance with her friend's parting request, Mrs. Clermont had given a solemn promise of continuing her journal; and as it was to be truly circumstantial, it necessarily employed great part of her time. While thus engaged, she generally locked her door to prevent interruption; but one day having unfortunately forgotten that precaution, Mr. Clermont suddenly appeared. Three sheets of paper had been filled ready to dispatch; to say the truth, they were as innocent a composition as ever issued from a female pen: but as they contained a repetition of what had passed in conversation between herself and husband, with comments on the happy change in his behaviour, she anxiously wished to conceal them from him; and
on

on his playfully attempting to take them from her, she threw them into the fire, and watched them till consumed, with serious solicitude.

Mr. Clermont's mind was not wholly free from the meanness of suspicion, and he felt deeply mortified at the idea of a wife's concealing secrets from him, which she implicitly confided to another. He suppressed his chagrin at the moment; but since his curiosity to penetrate into this interdicted correspondence was irresistible, he determined to use *any* means to develop the mystery.

He soon procured a letter of Miss Milton's, and upon breaking the seal, realized the proverb respecting the fate of suspicious people, for certainly the first paragraph was not very complimentary to himself: it follows,—

“Do not, my dearest Marianne, think me insensible of the pleasure you express, at your husband's appearing conscious of his cruel injurious treatment of you; I rejoice that your meek sensibility at last seems to

touch his heart with remorse, may the compunction be lasting ! But oh, my sweet friend, guard against the amiable susceptibility of your temper, nor any longer fix your happiness in the frail promises of weak irritable man. Recollect your father's admirable precepts, and contract your fond affection for one who never deserved, and does not return it."

If Mr. Clermont had possessed sufficient patience to peruse the whole letter, he would have found the asperity of this paragraph softened by several concessions in his favour, and would have perceived the epithets "weak" and "irritable," which had most piqued him, were in reality intended as a censure upon his whole sex. But his passion entirely overcame him, and flying to his lady's apartment, he peremptorily charged her immediately to break off all connection with an artful, base calumniator, who, under the specious mask of friendship, dared to interfere in the sacred concerns of wedlock, and to traduce a husband's character even to his wife.

wife. He concluded with a *threat*, that if she refused immediate compliance, she should never see him more; and after thus justifying Miss Milton's sentiments by his conduct, he tore the letter into a hundred pieces, and rushed out of the room.

Mrs. Clermont remained for some moments stupified with surprize, and gazing upon the fragments, in which she recognized the writing of her dear Eliza. Tears, her usual resource, at length came to her relief, and she was indulging in a very plentiful flow, when a servant entering the room, announced the arrival of Mr. and Miss Dudley: Marianne flew to meet them, and for a moment forgot her sorrow in their embraces.

I must now account for their sudden arrival. Mr. Dudley was hastened to London by letters from his agent, informing him that a clear discovery had been made of the long suspected villany of the elder Tonnereau, and that in consequence he was taken into custody; Louisa's ardent desire to see a sister, whose letters had for

some time betrayed an expression of tender melancholy, induced her to expedite her intended visit to Stannadine.

Mrs. Clermont did not wait for their inquiries to explain the reason for the tears which still swam in her radiant eyes; she frankly owned that her father had formed the justest estimate of the married state, but added, that perhaps even *he* would not have expected that Mr. Clermont's love should already have so far evaporated, as to permit him to insist upon her abandoning a friend, who had been the chief blessing of her life. She sobbed out her resolution never to renounce her Eliza, and then asked if her lot was not that of peculiar misery?

"No, my child," said Mr. Dudley, "you only participate in the ills common to humanity; and I have a satisfaction in reflecting, that the troubles arising from contrariety of temper and opinion, may be remedied by prudence and concession. Mr. Clermont has doubtless reasons to urge for this peremptory style. Where is he?"

he? I must see him, and bring about an immediate explanation."

A servant being summoned, informed them, that his master was gone out on horseback, and had refused any attendance. Mrs. Clermont's distress now assumed the appearance of phrenzy, from apprehensions respecting the safety of the person, whom she a few moments before considered as a relentless tyrant. Every domestick was dispatched in search of the dear fugitive, and scarcely could the efforts of her father and sister restrain her from joining them.

Intelligence at length arrived, that he had been seen on the road to the park; Mrs. Clermont now earnestly pressed her father to follow him, and to conjure him immediately to return home. Nothing else could alleviate her anxiety, and having obtained this promise from Mr. Dudley, she became tolerably calm.

Louisa's heart not only melted with pity for her sister's wild distress, but for the silent anguish which oppressed her de-

jected father. She knew his mind had lately received an additional weight of anguish, from the apprehension that he must either engage in a criminal prosecution, against a man with whom he had formerly lived in the strictest bond of friendship, or else suffer a nefarious villain to escape punishment; "My dear father," said Louisa to herself, while her sister was in the extremest paroxysms of grief, "with what calm dignity do you support sorrow?"

Having persuaded Marianne to recline on the sofa for a few minutes, she followed her father to the door, to breathe her ardent wishes for the success of his embassy; "I do not fear," replied Mr. Dudley, "but that I shall persuade Mr. Clermont to return; do you exercise your influence over your sister, and conjure her to abandon a friend, who I suspect has acted a most indefensible part; if she yields, her husband will probably be ashamed of his unmanly violence. My fears, Louisa, were but too just. They have
good

good hearts, and a real affection for each other; but Marianne is married to a man as enthusiastical and imprudent as herself. How disgraceful are these baby quarrels! How ridiculous these high theatrical passions, which subject them to the laugh of the neighbourhood! nay, worse, which point out to artful villany, means whereby it may *effectually* undermine domestick happiness."

Miss Dudley exerted all her eloquence, to persuade Mrs. Clermont to consent to any terms of reconciliation her husband should impose; her arguments were answered by declamatory flourishes on the inviolable sanctity of friendship, and the justice of defending one whose zeal, if allowed to be imprudent, was yet the result of pure affection.

Mr. Dudley was not more successful in his mediation; Mr. Clermont, after an exaggerated detail of his provocation, urged the fond *idolatry* with which he had loved his Marianne, and her *ingratitude*, in hesitating to sacrifice to his *just* resent-

ment her blind partiality for a dangerous woman, who assumed the pretext of friendship, to further her execrable designs against his peace. Lord Clermont, though less violent than his son, was *firmly* of opinion, that the intimacy with Miss Milton must be immediately terminated; and Lady Clermont, who happened unfortunately to be at the park, took this opportunity to vent her sarcastick malignity. She termed Marianne a well-meaning young creature, but to her *certain* knowledge, too deficient in her ideas of propriety, to be entirely entrusted with her own conduct.

Mr. Dudley checked the resentment of wounded paternal affection, by recollecting his character of mediator. He gave up Miss Milton's conduct, as wholly indefensible; and in general condemned confidants as dangerous to matrimonial peace. But he urged the propriety of gently loosening those ties, which, though absolutely fantastick, had a real influence over his daughter's mind. The very word

Mr.

Mr. Clermont had used (sacrifice) implied reluctance, and he pointed out how much more desirable it was that her reason should be convinced respecting the impropriety of her friend's conduct, and consequently the necessity of dissolving the connection; than, that a sudden breach should be imposed upon her, as an act of obedience. In the former case, Mr. Clermont might expect his wife would soon look *up* to him with grateful deference for having rescued her from a dangerous error; in the latter, a recollection of the violent measures which had been taken, would induce her to honour her severed friend with a regret of which she was unworthy. In conclusion, he urged his son-in-law to a generous unconditional return, by the consideration how powerfully such a concession would affect his daughter's heart.

Lady Clermont here interfered, and prevented these arguments from determining the yielding husband. She produced the letter in which the incautious

but well-intentioned Marianne had confessed, that weakness and precipitate confidence were her constitutional failings. Her Ladyship prevented all the impression the unquestionable ingenuousness of this acknowledgment might have made, by observing that she had long ago entirely forgiven the little offence which this letter was meant to palliate, and only produced it as a proof of the indisputable necessity of her son's supplying the firm decision, which the dear creature confessedly wanted, and of his rescuing his amiable wife from such a dangerous friend as Miss Milton was. This opinion met with general approbation, and Mr. Dudley, on his return to his daughter, recommended unconditional submission, as the only terms on which Mr. Clermont would consent to return home.

“I do not,” said he to Mrs. Clermont, “now urge your determination by common *motives*. Every thing which ought to be most dear and sacred to you is at stake. It is not four months since the
world

world saw you enter into marriage, under the happiest auspices of mutual love. Your disagreements cannot be concealed, and the most candid will hardly be able to persuade themselves that they could have proceeded to this length, without somewhat criminal on one side at least. Let your story, my dear girl, be told even by a partial friend, believe me the prudent part of the world will severely reprobate an attachment (though to a female) to which you can resolve to sacrifice the higher duties you have recently bound yourself, by the most solemn and inviolable oaths, to fulfil."

"Are then the names of wife and friend incompatible?" exclaimed Mrs. Clermont.

"I will give you my opinion on that subject hereafter, at present the *known* duty of a wife calls upon you for immediate performance. Risk not your future happiness by any further delay. Take your pen and dictate an adieu to Miss Milton. It may be affectionate, but let it be determined; and then recall your

husband whilst it is yet in your power to recall him."

Mrs. Clermont reluctantly complied. Her letter to her Eliza was blotted with tears, and incoherent through distress. After *one* gentle reproof, it was filled with copious complaints against the hard necessity which imposed a separation, and with protestations of inviolable regard. To these fond ebullitions of love, Miss Dudley subjoined a softened narrative of the events which had led to the prohibition; and she urged Miss Milton, by all her regard for her Marianne's future peace, not to attempt to dispute its validity.

I will insert Mrs. Clermont's letter to her husband—

"I have complied with your injunctions, and have given up for *you* the friend whose affection constituted my chief felicity for fourteen years: a friend whose only fault was indiscreet partiality for me! In doing this, I have torn from my heart its dearest object, yourself *alone* excepted. My regret cannot be disguised,
nor

nor will it yield to time. Your renewed and uniform tenderness can alone recompence me, for the sacrifice *you* have enjoined. Return, my Edward, immediately, and save your once beloved Marianne from sinking under the weight of her sorrows."

Mr. Dudley did not disapprove the pathetick sincerity expressed in this letter. It had the desired effect. Mr. Clermont immediately returned to Stan-nadine ; again entreated his lady to forget the past, and encouraged her to look forward to future golden days, by the *gracious* assurance that he would always remember her meritorious compliance.

CHAP. XXXII.

The author's opinion of the politicks of Hymen seems to be in favour of a limited monarchy.

THOUGH the quarrels of the Clermonts might, in their violence, frequency, and speedy termination, be justly compared

pared to the disputes of children, they did not end in *quite* so cordial a reconciliation. It is perhaps impossible to "pluck memory from her seat," or to "erase a written trouble from the brain," when the mind has passed the first stage of adolescence. Mrs. Clermont recollected that every disagreement had been adjusted with increased difficulty, her experience of the past gave her but a melancholy anticipation of the future, and the renunciation of so dear a connection was too painful, and imposed in too authoritative a manner, to be cheerfully submitted to. The fear of offending taught her to *try* to conceal her grief, but her pallid cheek and swollen eyes the next morning, plainly proved the night had been spent in tears.

Conscious of past severity, Mr. Clermont endeavoured to conciliate his wife's affections, by more marked attentions to her father. He earnestly pressed him to postpone his intended journey to town, to give up all endeavours to recover his fortune,

fortune, and to depend entirely upon the steady friendship with which he would cheerfully use every effort to alleviate his sorrows. Mr. Dudley's conduct in influencing his daughter's submission, had banished from her husband's mind a suspicion which an expression in Miss Milton's fatal letter excited, and Mr. Clermont now felt gratefully inclined to promote the wishes of a man, who had gratified his.

"Make my child happy," said Mr. Dudley, "and you will impose upon me the highest obligation."

Mr. Clermont threw his eyes upon the ground, and with a remorseful air, said, it should in future be his study to prove how highly he rated her compliance.

"I do not, Sir, mean to reproach you, or wholly to vindicate my daughter; but I wish strictly to caution you against two errors. Avoid calling in any person to witness your little domestick disputes; a mediator in matrimonial quarrels is more likely to widen than to heal the breach.

Rather

Rather chuse to keep every disagreement a profound secret for if they are at all exposed, curious impertinents will publish them with *added* circumstances, and, however painful these circumstances are to yourselves, the world will find in them matter for entertainment and ridicule.

“Let me also, my dear Sir, intreat you to look upon your wife’s errors with the tenderest indulgence. If an action can be referred to two motives, kindly affix that which is least reprehensible. You used an expression at the park, Mr. Clermont; it was inconsiderately uttered, yet it struck me to the heart. You called my child ungrateful. Her heart is devotedly yours, you may break it by unkindness, but you cannot estrange it. She is young, inexperienced, and romantick, but she is not, cannot be ungrateful. Ingratitude is the vice of a narrow, or depraved soul, it never exists in a warm impassioned disposition. Oh, Sir, pardon my agitation, but the daughter of the exalted woman I have long lamented, and speedily hope
to

to rejoin, never could disgrace her mother's memory by ingratitude to an affectionate husband."

"Proceed," said Mr. Clermont. "Your words sink into my soul; have you more to urge?"—"Nothing!" replied Mr. Dudley emphatically, and grasping him by the hand; "except that you will never suffer my Louisa to want a protector, or an asylum."

The ladies here entered, and Mr. Clermont turned aside to conceal the emotion Mr. Dudley's solemn reproof had excited. The fond father took this opportunity to slip a letter into Marianne's hand. "I had much to say to you, my dear child," said he, "and it is of too important a nature to be intrusted to the vague impression conversation imprints upon the mind. Your worthy husband has urged me to reside with you; his request is the more pleasing, as it evidently proceeds from his affection for you. If I live, I shall be often with you; if not, consult that paper, I shall speak in it when dead."

At

At these words his daughters burst into tears. "I must go with you to London, Sir," said Louisa. "You shall not leave me while you indulge these afflicting forebodings."

"My mind is uncommonly tranquil and serene, my dear girls, this morning. I wonder, Louisa, you do not perceive my artifice. I wished to make a deep impression upon Marianne's mind, and see I have succeeded. Dry your eyes, my darlings, and bid a cheerful adieu to that father whose only remaining wish is, to see his children happy."

While Mrs. Clermont threw herself into her father's arms in an agony of affection, the dignified Louisa raising her meek eyes to Heaven in a silent ejaculation, implored its beneficent attention to that interesting object, a good man in affliction. The air of forced gaiety which Mr. Dudley assumed at parting, could not banish the dejection the solemnity of his expressions had inspired. His daughters followed him with their eyes as long as possible,

possible, and then silently withdrew to their respective apartments.

I shall conclude this chapter with a copy of his letter to Mrs. Clermont.

‘Before I leave my Marianne, happy, I trust, in the recovered affections of her husband, I will give her my promised opinion, respecting a subject to which I thought her yesterday too much agitated to attend.

‘You asked me if the name of wife and friend are incompatible: certainly not. They are titles which mutually reflect lustre upon each other; and I have ever considered *that* young woman as particularly fortunate, who had secured the esteem of some discreet matron, and regulated her conduct by the dictates of experience. I must, however, repeat that a wife should *retain* no connections which her husband decidedly disapproves. A prudent woman indeed will never *form* any which can give pain to a reasonable man. She will chuse her friends with judgment, confide in them with caution,

‘caution, and love them with sincerity,
‘yet still with moderation. You may
‘think these limitations cold and narrow,
‘they are such as you ought always to
‘regard.

‘Female friendship, my child, is often
‘disgraced by a ridiculous imitation. Two
‘romantick girls select each other from
‘the general mass of their acquaintance
‘as fancy dictates. They relinquish the
‘practice of acknowledged virtues, to
‘indulge in a frivolous intimacy, and
‘while they gratify a propensity for mere
‘gossip, capricious expectations, and
‘fantastick desires, suppose that they
‘exhibit a model of one of those angelick
‘perfections which *dignify* our natures.

‘You say you have been accustomed
‘to communicate every sentiment of
‘your soul to your dear Eliza, and you
‘think, while so doing, you were at least
‘*innocently* employed. Time was not
‘given us to be idled away; has any
‘moral or mental improvement resulted
‘from this correspondence? Your heart

‘is good, your understanding not con-
‘temptible ; yet could you without con-
‘fusion see those sentiments publicly
‘divulged, of which you have made her
‘the unreserved depository. Has not the
‘desire of having somewhat to commu-
‘nicate, induced you to form a precipi-
‘tate judgment, and to utter opinions
‘which you afterwards wished to retract ?
‘Have not the commendations and tender
‘expressions you have been used to re-
‘echo to each other, vitiated your affec-
‘tions, and rendered you less sensible of
‘the tempered but uniform attachment
‘of your other connections ?

‘But supposing this perversion of time
‘pardonable in early youth, it can no *longer*
‘be excusable ; and had not Mr. Clermont’s
‘disapprobation suddenly obliged you to
‘terminate your connection with Miss
‘Milton, I should have thought that
‘your sense of the higher duties to which
‘you are called, would have convinced
‘you of the necessity of appropriating
‘less time to multiplied expressions of
‘unmean-

‘ unmeaning tenderness. You are a wife,
‘ my love ; you will, I hope, soon be a
‘ mother ; you are the mistress of a
‘ family ; you are a person of fortune ;
‘ you have had a liberal education. What
‘ an extensive scope of action do these
‘ characters imply ! Go, Marianne, and
‘ thank that Providence, who has placed
‘ you in a capacity to employ every por-
‘ tion of your time in important occupa-
‘ tions, and to exercise the noblest feelings
‘ of the human heart.

‘ Do not droop with vain regret, be-
‘ cause Mr. Clermont appears less fault-
‘ less than your enthusiastick imagination
‘ once supposed. Do not arraign the
‘ dispensations of Heaven, because you
‘ are not wholly exempt from the common
‘ ills incident to humanity. Instead of
‘ indulging a foolish curiosity respecting
‘ your husband’s conduct, fix your atten-
‘ tion upon your own. Do not regard
‘ what the idle and malevolent say of you,
‘ or him : you will both be impleaded at
‘ a different audit. Go, and comfort
‘ those

‘those who drain the dregs of that cup
‘of sorrow, of which you have but
‘slightly tasted. Go, and relieve the
‘wants of poverty, smooth the bed of
‘sickness, alleviate the anguish of incur-
‘able grief, dissipate the gloom of igno-
‘rance, and, if possible, limit the ravages
‘of vice. Rise to the noble task for
‘which you were called into existence.
‘You cannot want employment when
‘you have to prepare yourself for eternity.
‘You cannot be wretched while you can
‘make your fellow-creatures happy.

‘Adieu, my Marianne, respect your
‘husband’s virtues, and divert your atten-
‘tion from his failings. Love your sister,
‘she deserves your confidence and esteem.
‘Her trials have been singular, but they
‘have rendered her merit more conspi-
‘cuous. Once more farewell, my child ;
‘if I should not again see you in this
‘world, give yourself to my arms, and
‘to the arms of your fainting mother, as
‘an angel of light, in a purer state of
‘existence.

‘RICHARD DUDLEY.’

CHAP. XXXIII.

The discerning Reader may discover symptoms of approaching events, of the painful kind.

FOR some time Mr. and Mrs. Clermont appeared to have derived considerable advantage from the precepts they had received, and their whole behaviour promised a perfect renewal of harmony and happiness. *He* divided his time judiciously between the claims of social life, and the elegant amusements to which he was attached; and *she* turning her attention to the active engagements of benevolence and domestic management, soon made a considerable proficiency, being assisted in her progress by her sister, who was an adept in the practice of the retired virtues.

Christmas is a season peculiarly adapted to the purposes of hospitality, and whilst the Clermonts liberally supplied the wants of their indigent neighbours, they did not neglect those inferior but not unimportant

ant claims, which the laws of society require. Notwithstanding their disappointment on a former occasion, the surrounding country were invited to an elegant entertainment; and as the hope of the inviters, respecting giving pleasure and acquiring popularity, was not so sanguine as before, their humble views were more fully gratified. Indeed they seemed to conciliate the affections of their neighbours, by not attempting any extraordinary degree of splendour or novelty; for we always reluctantly pay the applause *demanded* of us by that merit which is avowedly superiour, or that excellence which is conscious of its own desert.

This flattering prospect was interrupted by the illness of Lord Clermont. He had been for some weeks at Bath, indisposed by an hereditary gout; and at length grew so alarmingly ill, as to render his son's presence necessary. It was Mr. Clermont's wish, that his Marianne should accompany him, but she, unused to publick scenes, fond of retirement, disgusted with society,

and attached to the habits she had lately adopted, preferred remaining at Stannadine; till her sister strongly urged the danger of risking her newly-recovered happiness, by appearing indifferent to her husband's desire of her society.

Another motive influenced Louisa to give this advice. Though Mr. Dudley had prudently concealed his observations from Marianne, he had imparted to his elder daughter his apprehension of some latent malignity in Lady Clermont; and intreated her occasionally to guard her sister against the machinations of envy and revenge. Miss Dudley, confiding in the rectitude of Marianne's heart, and the innocence of her conduct, supposed her presence would most effectually silence calumny, and defeat cunning. This opinion was theoretically right, but it argued little knowledge of the world, or, to use a more appropriate and less hackneyed phrase, of extreme human depravity; for I am persuaded that real malevolence is not so common, as mistake, prejudice, and

and a censorious habit. This last, the busy daughter of Idleness and Vanity, does an infinitude of mischief, with no worse design than amusing itself, and shewing its own importance. It is the "fool who tosses about firebrands in sport."

The motive that hurried the Clermonts to Bath, precluding Miss Dudley from accompanying them; she returned to Seatondell, and there had leisure to moralize upon the incidents of her sister's history. From it she deduced another proof to illustrate these important truths, that happiness is distributed with a much evenner hand than a cursory observer would suppose; and that its true seat is in the soul, which, when well disposed, can humbly imitate its great Author, and create a Paradise in a desert.

Recollecting the high expectations her sister had formed, and her father's unregarded predictions that they would be disappointed, the Trojan prophetess came into her mind, and she composed the following

SONNET.

Her hair dishevel'd, and her robe unty'd,
 Cassandra rush'd amongst the festal train,
 What time young Paris sang his nuptial strain,
 And led to Priam's roof the Spartan bride :
 Of certain woes that must that crime betide.
 The holy virgin prophesied in vain ;
 Her warning voice could no attention gain
 Till Pyrrhus levell'd Ilium's tow'ring pride.
 Ah ! in the horrors of that night aghast,
 What shrieks, prophetick maid, thy truth declar'd !
 And thus when youth beholds Misfortune's blast
 O'erturn the fairy bow'rs by Fancy rear'd,
 Too late it muses on the precepts sage
 Of cool experience, and predictive age.

The letters Miss Dudley received from London informed her, that Mr. Tonnereau had dissipated his whole fortune, previous to his being taken into custody ; the creditors, therefore, could propose no other end in prosecuting him for having concealed part of his effects, than that of bringing a villain to punishment. Mr. Dudley started another hope, which appeared more than a phantom. The particular ship in which his property was embarked, instead of
having

having been captured with the rest of the fleet, had escaped into a neutral port in Spanish America; the Government of which had ordered the cargo to be confiscated, under the pretence of its being designed for contraband trade; but in reality, from the suspicious spirit with which the Spaniards conduct their colonial affairs, and their jealousy of the commercial importance of England. Here Mr. Pelham's friendship promised a most fortunate interposition; he was luckily very intimate with the Spanish Ambassador, and through his means a strong memorial was forwarded to the council of the Indies, stating the injustice of the transaction, and demanding restitution. Little doubt was entertained of that illustrious synod's deciding with equity, and the only disagreeable circumstance would be, the obliging Mr. Dudley to take a voyage to Spain. The fond father concluded, exulting in the hope, that he should at last be able to reward the exemplary virtue of his child.

Louisa's heart experienced a sensation very different from pleasure, at the apprehension of what her father's declining health might suffer from a sea-voyage. In her answer she begged him to abandon a project which she knew he formed principally with a view to her emolument. Her desire, she informed him, centered in her dear little farm, which, even at that early period of spring, wore a promising appearance. The crops looked vigorous, the plantations were healthy, and the house was so considerably improved by the little sums which had been expended upon it, as to appear quite a cheerful habitation. "My garden," said she, "is now decorated with a profusion of vernal flowers, the germs of the lilack are bursting; and my morning walks are enlivened with the carol of birds, and the busy hum of bees. I look forward to the approach of May with lover-like expectations, and have indeed solicited the agreeable goddess to hasten her approach, in the following address:

SONNET

SONNET TO MAY.

Come, May, attir'd in splendor all thy own ;
Enchantress, come ! re-animate the grove,
Hang on the buoyant breeze, thy floating throne,
And wake the song of universal love :
The sprouting herbage for thy mandate stays,
Long nipp'd and shrivel'd by protracted cold ;
And the swoln corn still fearfully delays,
Till thou shalt bid the tender blade unfold.
The shiv'ring Nays, who despairing fled,
When rude Aquarius rear'd his icy pale,
Lead back their fountains to their wonted bed,
Prepar'd to murmur through the grassy vale ;
The fair-hair'd graces, and Idalian boy,
Await thy call to lead the dance of rural joy.

“ Your presence, my dear father, will add to all the beauties which the season promises, a charm in which they are deficient : I mean that of society. Poor Waldon regrets your absence almost as much as myself ; he visits me very frequently. I believe we entertain our neighbours ; but in defiance of scandal, I always tell him that I am glad to see him ; and have just persuaded him to teach me backgammon. Sometimes I divert him by musick and singing ;

singing ; yet I will own our tête-a-têtes have a sameness in them, which I believe proceeds from the recollection of more agreeable trios. Dear Sir, return to Seatondell, I need no Spanish dollars to make me happy.

“If your resolution is too far fixed to yield to my intreaties, you must allow me to be equally tenacious of my determination of accompanying you. My fear of the sea cannot deter me from fulfilling the duty which I owe you. Do not contest this point with me, I claim it as a right due to the affection of your ever-grateful daughter,

“LOUISA DUDLEY.”

CHAP. XXXIV.

Mrs. Prudentia further developes a character of extreme malevolence, but without copying the likeness from her own sisterhood.

THE order of my narrative conducts me back to Marianne's history.

Mr.

Mr. Clermont, on his arrival at Bath, found his father considerably recovered from his alarming indisposition, to the extreme mortification of Lady Clermont, who flattered herself that she should be speedily released from the hateful yoke of unhappy marriage. The natural disagreeableness of her temper, completely soured by contemptuous treatment, and now galled by *disappointment*, in spite of the assumed suavity of politeness, impressed upon her peevish countenance the wretchedness of her heart. The youth, beauty, and sweetness of Marianne, had at first excited in her mind the baleful passion of envy. Her tender affections had never been poured into the bosom of her family; she was still in the prime of life, and unwilling to renounce the false satisfaction she received from listening to the Syren song of adulation. Mrs. Clermont must now of necessity be introduced into that part of the great world which the season had convened at Bath. Her Ladyship expected to find her a powerful

rival; but when Marianne first visited the rooms, her beauty excited an attention far exceeding *those* expectations. Unfortunately the lovely recluse became quite the fashion; her simplicity and *naïveté* increased her elegance; and her modesty and diffidence had all the charm of novelty, in the circle to which she was introduced. The town rung with, “did you ever see so lovely a creature? How astonishing she did not come out sooner.” The compliments and attention paid to Lady Clermont’s rank were cold and faint, and rendered the admiration which youth and beauty attracted still more apparent.

There was besides another motive to excite envy and hatred in her Ladyship’s breast; Marianne appeared to have recovered the heart of her husband; their behaviour to each other, though not distinguished by the unremitting assiduity of fond lovers, was indicative of complacency and mutual affection. Sometimes a soft melancholy appeared in her countenance, but it was so tempered with
sweetness,

sweetness, that, instead of offending, it seemed to charm Mr. Clermont, and to engage him to a more studiously tender attention, in hopes of dispelling the meek, placid dejection.

Lady Clermont was both wretched and disagreeable herself, and every person who appeared amiable and happy, was to her an object of disgust. The mild lustre of wedded love, which she now every day beheld, increased, by the power of contrast, the gloom of her own misery. She determined to endeavour to interrupt the happiness she could not share, and reconciled herself to the diabolical design, by overlooking Marianne's merits, and aggravating her faults. She *resolved* to think her a weak, yet cunning girl; she termed her refinement and sensibility, affectation; her tenderness, hypocrisy; and she pretended to pity her son, for having been duped by such an inferior character.

Meanwhile Mrs. Clermont's conduct, though not free from indiscretion, was amiable and intentionally right. Instead of being captivated by the noise and glare

of fashionable life, she seemed disgusted and confounded. The voice of admiration which every where pursued her, did not excite even a momentary satisfaction. Instead of being enchanted with the attention of the fine gentlemen who followed her, she attached criminality to what others termed innocent gallantry; and by the rustick morality of her notions soon offended all her Cecisbeos. In her opinion, every deviation from the strict rules of virtue and delicacy sunk a character into the lowest pit of infamy; had she confined this sentiment to her own breast, it would only have had the salutary effect of regulating her own conduct; but Mrs. Clermont was one of those who think aloud, and she was remarkably injudicious in the choice of those persons to whom she imparted her opinions. If their behaviour was decent, and she had never heard any harm of them, she candidly concluded that their hearts were as innocent and undefining as her own; and that their sentiments must correspond. She had seen too little of the world to know

know that propriety of manner is often assumed by profligacy, and that many characters are infamous which have not been exposed to publick notoriety. Indeed she was unacquainted with the private history and connections of the great world; and one day in the pump-room exclaimed against the folly and wickedness of using cosmeticks, to a faded ghost of beauty, who was just arrived from the Hot-Wells, where she had been endeavouring to repair the ravages which paint had made in her constitution. Another time, Mrs. Clermont left off dancing, to protest against the shameful effrontery with which a married Lady who stood near her, encouraged the advances of her partner. Her indignation was proper, but the person to whom she vented it was a celebrated demirep, who had been separated from her husband for more than *doubtful* gallantry: though, as she was a woman of high rank, the world *chose* to be charitable, and still admitted her into society. But Mrs.

Clermont

Clermont committed a still more pointed error, upon being invited to play at gold Loo, when she positively assured a peeress who had just ruined her lord at Pharo, that nothing should ever induce her to engage in the infamous habit of gaming, which she thought not only foolish and extravagant, but indelicate and immoral.

Lady Clermont beheld her daughter-in-law's mistakes with pleasure, hoping that they would have the effect of terminating her popularity. Nor was she disappointed. Some hated the fair reprover, from the idea that she intended to affront them. Others despised her as a fool, because she was ignorant of what every body else knew. The most candid considered her as an impertinent moralist, and every body was ready, at least, to *bear* tales to her disadvantage.

I shall hazard a bold conjecture, yet I am inclined to affirm, that the genius of gossiping has as many worshippers in the refined circles of high life, as even in the environs of Danbury. They indeed
assume

assume a more polished appearance, and speak out of a courtly vocabulary; but their idol is still the offspring of vanity and idleness, and their pursuits and pleasures are eventually the same.

Amongst the company which the season had summoned to Bath, Mr. Clermont had the pleasure to recognize his friend Aubrey. That young gentleman *really* possessed a good heart, joined to an agreeable originality of manner. He was delighted to find that the thoughtless impropriety of his behaviour at Stannadine, had not essentially injured his friend's happiness, and he was impatient to obtain Mrs. Clermont's *full* forgiveness; for he sincerely admired both her person and character. Marianne was placable in her disposition, she felt a predilection for her husband's most intimate friend, which might be esteemed an implied compliment to his taste, and she found Mr. Aubrey a man of good sense and information, qualities not always discernable in modern men of the world. Nothing could be
purer

purser than her heart, or more innocent than her conduct; but even discretion will not always preserve us from calumny. An invidious whisper, first invented by the watchful malice of Lady Clermont, was rapidly circulated by that pestiferous humour of detraction, against which I will ever dart my lance with true Quixote fervour, until I have banished it from society. The success of my warfare is at best but problematical; yet surely the laudable design merits approbation. I am convinced its accomplishment would prove a greater blessing to society, than most of the projects of reform suggested by *modern* patriots and philosophers.

To return from my digression; detraction was not the only engine employed by Lady Clermont against her daughter's peace: the reader will remember that I some time ago left Mrs. Patty busily employed in an unsuccessful endeavour to discover her master's faults. She had been lately thrown into the shade; for Miss Dudley, during her visit at Stannadine,

dine, had argued so forcibly against the folly and danger of low confidants, that a visible alteration took place in Mrs. Clermont's behaviour. Our redoubted Abigail was piqued at the change, and determined to recover her mistress's favour; even if it was at the expence of her repose.

Chance promoted her design by a common incident. A violent fracas took place between herself and Mrs. Bonjou, Lady Clermont's waiting-woman; on precedence, beauty, and consequence. On the last head Patty urged, that her lady had never treated her like a common servant; that she told her all her secrets, and whenever a quarrel took place between her master and her lady, she was the first person informed of it. She added, she could say a great deal more if she chose it; but that her lady *knew* her prudence, or she never would have given her the commissions she had done.

Highly as Patty thought of her own understanding, she had to encounter people of superior art. Mrs. Bonjou flew

to

to her lady, whose saturnine features relaxed with pleasure at the intelligence. Recovering from a hearty laugh, a luxury she did not often enjoy, "Well, Bonjou," said she, "I desire you will henceforth honour Mrs. Patty's consequence with proper treatment, or, as she is her mistress's particular friend, I may chance to be implicated in your quarrels. But seriously I cannot think Mrs. Clermont quite so great a fool; suppose you try. Get acquainted with this prodigy of prudence, and bore her with some story, no matter what. We shall see if it circulates, and if it does, I will make it a means to deter *my* son's wife from disgracing herself by such respectable attachments."

Mrs. Bonjou understood her office. She made a conciliatory apology to Patty, and they became sworn friends. In the course of their intimacy, the latter divulged every family secret which she either knew or suspected; and Mrs. Bonjou was extremely sorry for the pretty young creature, for she knew her young Lord never deserved

deserved her. "Vat you think," said she, "he go to Monsieur Aubrey for love, so often. Oh no, all sham. He do not go to see Monsieur Aubrey, but one sad diable woman, little way off; and then says he goes there."

Patty hastened to communicate this terrible intelligence. She found her mistress in her dressing room, waiting for Lady Clermont's summons to attend her to the rooms. There was an unusual degree of sprightliness in her manner, and a placid smile upon her countenance, which few people would have chosen to disturb. Patty's prefatory assurance that she had something very important to say, interrupted this happy calm; and ere her tale was finished, a death-like paleness stole over every feature. At this instant Lady Clermont entered; "The carriage, my dear, waits," said she, and without appearing to perceive that Marianne's trembling limbs could scarce support her, hurried her into the chariot with officious attention.

CHAP. XXXV.

Innocence and simplicity are insufficient guards against malignity and detraction, unless accompanied by discretion.

LADY Clermont, though not naturally of a communicative disposition, happened this evening to be unusually conversible. She indulged herself in a number of bright sallies, and finding them not honoured with proper attention, descended in praise of cheerfulness, which she defined to be an infallible sign of a good heart, and a contented mind.

During her Ladyship's harangue, the afflicted Marianne sat almost devoid of utterance or recollection. Thought followed thought, in agonizing succession, but none of them tended to organize the chaos in her soul. The carriage at length stopped, and they proceeded to the ball room, where Mrs. Clermont declining every invitation to dancing or cards, retired into

an

an obscure corner, and, absorbed in her own distress, remained insensible to the gay scene around her.

Roused from this reverie by the voice of Mr. Aubrey, she started, looked round with apprehension, and felt in his unexpected appearance the confirmation of all her fears: for Mr. Clermont had declined accompanying her that evening, on the pretext of a pre-engagement to dine with his friend. She enquired after her husband, with an eagerness for which Aubrey could as little account, as for the melancholy position in which she was sitting when he first accosted her. He attempted to relieve her distress, by assuring her, that his friend was perfectly well but two hours ago. "Where is he now?" enquired Mrs. Clermont with redoubled agitation. Aubrey vowed he could not tell. The party had broken up sooner than was intended, and he knew not how Clermont had disposed of himself, he believed to the play, and offered to go and look for him. "Have the humanity," said she, "first

to order my carriage; I will return home immediately." He begged she would let him go and call Lady Clermont, who was engaged in a party at cards. "Oh no!" exclaimed Marianne; "her presence will only be a restraint upon me, and my heart is too full to consult propriety." He offered her his arm, it was a support which her extreme agitation rendered necessary, and she hurried out of the room, either unconscious that her behaviour had excited general attention, or too much disordered to regard it. The rival beauties whom her superior charms had mortified, and the specious hypocrites whom her unguarded remarks had tacitly reproved, now joined in exclaiming against "the detected moralist," as they termed her. Her declining Lady Clermont's attendance had been overheard; the words she used were capable of an invidious construction, and they readily gave them that tendency; but when it was observed that Mr. Aubrey was not afterwards seen in the assembly rooms that evening, they all declared that candour

dour itself could suppose no other than that Mrs. Clermont was criminal; sarcastically adding, that it was doubtless the first affair she had ever engaged in, or she would have managed her assignation less publickly.

I will however vindicate Mrs. Clermont to my readers, and *assure* them that she returned home *alone*, that she retired to her chamber, declined Patty's attendance, and judiciously entered upon the task of calm recollection. She remembered her father's invaluable letter, and again perused it, with a design to see if any thing he said would apply to the present emergency. His precepts against suspiciously watching her husband's conduct, and believing (or indeed listening to) every idle tale were in point, and she began to think that she had yielded to her old infirmity of afflicting herself upon slight grounds, and suffering her passions to obscure her judgment. She determined to dismiss the officious Patty, who she perceived sedulously employed herself in agitating her mind,

mind, and while she was in this temper, she heard Mr. Clermont's voice upon the stairs. She flew to meet him; he anxiously enquired respecting the indisposition of which Mr. Aubrey had just given him a confused and alarming account. He told her that he had hurried out of the theatre the moment his friend brought him this intelligence, and the candour and solicitude of his manner confirmed this assurance.

It generally happens when a suspected person clears himself in one instance from a fault of which he was accused, that a generous mind immediately forgets its former doubts, and invests the acquitted person in the white robe of unsullied innocence. It proved so in the present instance. The towering edifice of tragedy sorrow which Mrs. Clermont had been for some hours erecting, fell to the ground. *He* was no longer treacherous, false, ungrateful, but every thing that was kind and good; nor was she a miserable forsaken woman, but a credulous creature who had behaved

behaved very ridiculously, for a reason which she was ashamed to own. Candid and generous, she confessed herself exceedingly to blame, in giving way to her feelings from slight mistakes and misrepresentations; she intreated Mr. Clermont would not require an explanation of the past, and promised greater self-command in future. No husband would like to be summoned in an alarming manner, from a favourite diversion, to attend upon a wife's whims. He felt disposed to give a gentle lecture, which she was receiving with meek contrition, when Lady Clermont appeared full of anxiety for the dear creature's health, having but that moment heard of her illness. Her apprehensions on that head being removed, she very tenderly blamed Marianne for not requiring her attendance. It was very *odd*, my dear, in you, particularly in *your* situation, to take Mr. Aubrey home with you; you ought to have had a female friend. "Aubrey, Madam!" exclaimed Mr. Clermont. "Aubrey could not go home with her.

He saw her to the chariot, and then came in search of me." "Indeed!" replied her Ladyship; "then I beg, Edward, that you will make that circumstance known. It is highly important that it should, I assure you. I will take care to tell Lady Richly *myself*, that the world is mistaken. Mr. Aubrey did not go home with Mrs. Clermont."

So innocent was Marianne's heart, that she did not even understand the *point* of this insinuation, and the next morning, when Mr. Aubrey called to enquire after her health, she did not consider her being alone in her dressing-room, a sufficient reason to prevent her from receiving a visit from her husband's friend. She even met him with a smile of gratitude, and after assuring him that she was perfectly recovered, and thanking him for his attention the preceding evening; "I have," said she, "two requests to make. Endeavour to forget how absurdly I behaved last night; and when you hear me
censured

censured for it, try if possible to invent an excuse for me."

"I must first *see* your absurdities," replied Aubrey, "before I can forget them; and as for the censures of the idle and the envious, it is the tax which merit must always pay. I assure you I should never have wished for the honour of your acquaintance, if I had not been told by every body, that you was the strangest of all strange beings."

At this instant Mr. Clermont entered the room. He was just returned from a publick breakfast, where he had heard his wife's conduct canvassed in an audible whisper. The ladies affirmed that she must be very seriously indisposed; for it was evident she knew not what she was about. The gentlemen affected to envy Aubrey as a lucky fellow, in having the honour to escort the divine creature home. Though these witticisms afforded mirth to *them*, they were death to Mr. Clermont's peace. He construed every enquiry after his lady, which politeness dictated, into an

oblique affront, and unable to command himself, he returned home in very ill humour; and surprised Mr. Aubrey and Mrs. Clermont engaged in very lively conversation, which the gloom in his manner suddenly terminated. His Aubrey was never before unwelcome, nor did his Marianne's smiles ever give torture to his heart till that moment. He restrained his feelings, but they made an indelible impression upon his mind; and Mrs. Clermont might certainly refer the misery of her future life to these apparently trivial incidents.

I have described these circumstances with some degree of minuteness, for though the effect of them did not immediately appear, or only in a small degree of fallen reserve, they sunk deep into Mr. Clermont's soul, and gradually produced a *total* change of character. I will not minutely detail this alteration, but will confine my garrulous humour to a general account of its causes and consequence.

The spirit that took possession of Mr. Clermont's mind, though not strictly jealousy, bore a near affinity to that "green-eyed monster." He was not so credulous as to believe the calumnies of detraction, nor so undiscerning as not to perceive his mother's malice: nor did he doubt his Marianne's innocence, or even *once* suspect that her gentle heart had strayed from its acknowledged possessor. He knew the purity of her soul, and the constancy of her temper, but this did not acquit her of levity and indiscretion; upon which basis he judged it possible that slander and calumny had erected their fabrick of falsehood. She was herself conscious of impropriety, and ashamed to disclose the motives of her behaviour. She had owned herself to have acted very wrong, and this confession carried with it the force of a thousand witnesses. His thoughts ran in the same strain of fastidious delicacy with the great Roman conqueror. "My wife must not

only be free from guilt, but also from suspicion."

Early in life, before his character was formed, or his opinions methodized, Mr. Clermont entered into marriage; with vague, floating ideas of angelick goodness, and consummate bliss. In proportion as his romantick enthusiasm had raised the mortal nymph into a goddess, his cooler, but not more accurate judgment, as the infatuation of love subsided, magnified her errors into indelible offences. He saw her weakness, timidity, irresolution, and imprudence: he forgot her gentleness, sweetness, candour, and generosity. Vanity had ever been intermingled with his love. He fancied that when he produced his idol to the world, every heart would acknowledge its perfection, every tongue confess his happiness and applaud his judgment. His Marianne had been produced to the world. The transient admiration which she had at first excited had rather been a tribute paid to her beauty than to her intellectual endowments;

ments; it soon subsided, and now her conduct was ridiculed and her character defamed. He had not courage to withstand "the world's dread laugh, which scarce the firm philosopher can scorn." His temper was not naturally gentle, it had only acquired an occasional suavity from love; and as love expired, it resumed its usual tendency. The polished manners of the gentleman decorated his behaviour with the faint gilding of civility, and softened surly contempt into polite indifference; but affection was extinct, esteem did not supply its place, and pride alone prompted him to give some degree of consequence to the woman whom he had honoured with his name; when he treated her with occasional complacency, and rescued her from his mother's virulent malice.

Mrs. Clermont had adhered to her resolution of dismissing Patty, and she, like most confidential servants, ungratefully revenged herself upon her lady's supposed unkindness, by disclosing all

the secrets with which she had been intrusted. Miss Milton's highly indiscreet advice, and the irresolute Marianne's weak compliance, were now known by every servant in the family; and Lady Clermont took care that her son should *not* be ignorant that his wife had employed a spy upon his conduct. The breach now became irreparable. Lord Clermont's urgent desire of having a grandson to inherit his estate, could scarce impose a temporary civility upon the enraged husband; or prevent him from breaking forth into the most violent expostulations: while the insidious mother, by appearing to plead for the poor, inexperienced, well-meaning, misled young creature, effectually undermined every sentiment of confidence and regard; and sunk the unhappy Marianne into an object of pity, and perhaps contempt.

Mr. Clermont now determined to carry his wife back to Stannadine, where he resolved she should in future conceal her folly in obscurity. For himself, he intended
soon

soon to plunge into the bustle of public life, and endeavour to forget both the expectations and disappointments of love. The state of Mrs. Clermont's mind upon discovering that she had lost her husband's heart, will not require explanation. It was wretchedness in the extreme. She tried to recal the dear unkind by tears, and soft complaints; but he always avoided the latter by leaving the room, and he had now too often seen the former to be affected by an April shower.

The history of Mrs. Clermont's married life, may teach ladies not to depend upon the durability of that evanescent affection which lovers feel. It may admonish their sanguine adorers not to expect too much, nor yet to reject and despise what is amiable, because it is not perfect. Perhaps I shall be censured for ascribing the destruction of married happiness to such light causes; but I am willing to appeal to the experience of every wedded pair, whether *great* criminality on either

side is necessary, in order to render the bonds of Hymen a galling yoke of misery. My mind is open to conviction, and if I have been wrong, I shall at least acquire a more consolatory prospect of the happiness of my fellow-creatures.

CHAP. XXXVI.

Integrity and duty are the cordials of affliction.

MY thirty-third chapter concluded with a letter from Miss Dudley to her father; I shall begin this with his reply.

‘It is not upon slight grounds and capricious motives, that I reject the intreaties of my dear child, so affectionately and earnestly urged. I am influenced by a principle which I have venerated through the whole course of my life, and which I ought not to renounce in the closing scenes. I *know*, when I have explained myself, you will have the greatness of soul to approve my conduct.

‘But

‘But I must first inform you of an
‘incident which has deeply afflicted me.
‘Mr. Tonnereau yesterday disgracefully
‘terminated his existence by his own
‘hands. Unhappy man! He found that
‘some of his creditors were resolutely bent
‘to expose his conduct, and to push their
‘discoveries to the utmost extremity. He
‘knew that his guilt was so far developed,
‘that no subterfuge could avail; and he
‘dreaded the austerity of those laws which
‘he had provoked. He trembled at the
‘*vengeance* of man, but he did not fear to
‘brave that of God!

‘You know, Louisa, how much I once
‘esteemed him. He was the friend of
‘my early youth, and for many years I
‘can *affirm* that his conduct was formed
‘upon principles of honest industry. I
‘am assured that latterly he considerably
‘deviated from the auspicious commence-
‘ment of his life. He has been dissipated
‘and extravagant, and then to redeem his
‘tottering credit, he has applied to the
H 6 ‘dangerous.

‘ dangerous resources of the gaming-
‘ table.

‘ When I consider this man’s last scenes
‘ of life, can I term my own situation
‘ unfortunate? Deserted by the licen-
‘ tious companions of his follies; justly
‘ execrated by those injured people, who
‘ (though once his friends) now con-
‘ sider their acquaintance with him as the
‘ most disastrous circumstance of their
‘ lives; his character held up by those
‘ who are strangers to his person, as a
‘ mark of abhorrence and infamy; alone
‘ in a prison, destitute of the comforts of
‘ life, though till then accustomed to
‘ its superfluities; no one near him, but
‘ a mercenary attendant, callous through
‘ familiarity with misery; no eye to pity
‘ his sorrows; no friendly bosom on which
‘ to repose his griefs; his own reflections
‘ his worst enemies; and even despairing
‘ of mercy from the fountain of goodness.
‘ Unhappy Tonnereau! I pity thee too
‘ much to hate thee.

‘ But

‘ But let me recollect myself. Since I
‘ have been in London, I have taken an
‘ inventory of my effects, and find they
‘ will not be sufficient to discharge the
‘ debts which I contracted, with, as I
‘ thought, full ability of payment. Inte-
‘ grity is no less the character of an
‘ English merchant than enterprise; nor
‘ can I willingly renounce the glorious
‘ boast which I have hitherto enjoyed, of
‘ having never injured any one in per-
‘ son or property. I cannot retain it,
‘ if I neglect any probable opportunity
‘ of recovering enough of my fortune to
‘ satisfy every legal claim upon me.
‘ The infirmities of the body may inter-
‘ rupt the soul in the exertion of its
‘ sublime speculative functions; but they
‘ never ought to impede us in the per-
‘ formance of positive duties, unless by
‘ imposing total inability. I have not
‘ long to live, my dear, even according
‘ to the course of nature; and lately I
‘ have been frequently unwell. A sea-
‘ voyage may be of service to me, but
‘ supposing

A GOSSIP'S STORY.

‘ supposing the worst, what is the loss
‘ of a few months of painful existence,
‘ to the pleasure of reflecting in my last
‘ hours, that by sacrificing it, no injured
‘ orphan or widow has cause to curse my
‘ ashes; and that I have prevented my
‘ children from being followed by the
‘ clamours of my defrauded creditors?

‘ Mr. Pelham has received intelligence
‘ by means of the Ambassador, that the
‘ Council of the Indies have admitted
‘ the legality of my claims, and as soon
‘ as I appear personally to identify them,
‘ the value of my part of the ship’s
‘ cargo will be punctually paid. I am
‘ determined to take my passage on board
‘ of the first packet that sails for Corunna.
‘ I shall not decline the kind offer of
‘ your company, for the complaint in my
‘ side is at times very troublesome; it
‘ often affects my breath, but when my
‘ dear nurse is with me I shall be better.
‘ Set out, my love, as soon as you receive
‘ this. I am still with my friend, nor can
‘ I offer to change my residence during
‘ the

‘ the short stay we shall make in London,
 ‘ without offending him. His aunt, Mrs.
 ‘ Penelope Pelham, is desirous to be ac-
 ‘ quainted with you. She is a little
 ‘ singular, but upon the whole a worthy
 ‘ woman. I will promise you a most
 ‘ affectionate reception from Mr. Pelham.
 ‘ Let us know when you set out, and we
 ‘ will meet you at the last stage. Adieu,
 ‘ hasten to the arms of your

‘ Affectionate father,

‘ RICHARD DUDLEY.’

In little more than a week from the receipt of this letter Miss Dudley arranged her affairs at Seatondell, preparatory to an absence of some months, and finished a journey from Lancashire to London. It was part of her character to form her plans with propriety, and to execute them with dispatch. I therefore forbid any conjectures as to the effect the promised *affectionate* reception from Mr. Pelham might have upon her expedition. Desirous to surprise her father with her speed, she forbore to send any intelligence

of her motions, but wished to be the agreeable herald of her own arrival. An accident which happened during the last day's journey, detained her upon the road, and she did not arrive at Portland-Place till near midnight. She sent in her name, and Mr. Pelham immediately appeared to conduct her from the carriage. Her heart throbbed with the liveliest transport, and a crimson blush irradiated her countenance; but he received her with a solemn embarrassed air, and led her almost without speaking to his aunt. My friend, Mrs. Penelope, might, both in person and manner, be termed a brief abstract of our sisterhood: she moved by rule, and spoke in a measured cadence. The cold formality of her welcome added to poor Louisa's chagrin, she ventured to turn her eyes upon Mr. Pelham, his were fixed upon the ground. Was this the promised reception? Did "that sun of benignity which shone in his countenance," to adopt an expression of her father's, shine on all but her? Was it

it possible for *her* to have displeased him, or had she, by the pleasure she shewed at seeing him, unguardedly discovered the secret of her heart?

After a few faint efforts to support ceremonious conversation, Mr. Pelham with hesitation said, he would go and acquaint Mr. Dudley of his daughter's arrival. Louisa recollecting her father's early habits, to which since his indisposition he had strictly adhered, observed the lateness of the hour, and begged that he might not be informed till morning.

Mr. Pelham gravely replied, he was afraid his friend was not asleep. A thousand distracting fears rushed into Miss Dudley's mind. She recollected that her questions respecting her father's health had been evasively answered. She started from her chair, and with a look of inexpressible alarm, laid her hand involuntarily upon Mr. Pelham's, and conjured him not to deceive her; she knew her father was worse than usual.

“ He

“He is indeed,” replied Mr. Pelham, holding her trembling hand. “I need not assure you that I take the most lively interest in his safety. We have called in Dr. L. You have probably heard of his medical reputation; but I hope most from your presence. Your father’s anxiety to see you has considerably aggravated his disease. Be calm, dear Madam, I beseech you. We have by no means abandoned hope.”

“When was he seized?”

“He has been evidently unwell ever since he has been with us; and I have sometimes drawn from him a reluctant complaint, that the disorder in his side was at times insupportably painful. I fear the uneasiness of his mind has encreased his disease; and the dreadful criminality of Tonnereau’s death gave him a shock, which has hastened the crisis. He has been confined to his bed these three days. He is now extremely feverish. We fear an abscess is forming.”

Unable

Unable to support the painful intelligence, Louisa sunk into her chair. "Nephew," said Mrs. Penelope, as she advanced, holding out her salts, "do not keep the lady in suspense. You ought to tell her the worst at first. Your papa, Madam, is quite given up by Dr. L. and I am very glad he has done with him, for *I* never liked his prescriptions, and I hope you will now persuade Mr. Dudley to try an invaluable medicine, which I have often administered, and never knew it fail of effect. Mr. Pelham knows that he owes his life to it."

Louisa could only reply by a flood of tears; a salutary relief to her big swollen heart. Her head dropped almost lifeless upon Mrs. Penelope's bosom, who, whilst busily employed in rubbing her temples, and administering pungent restoratives, alternately censured her want of fortitude, and commended her affection; aggravated Mr. Dudley's danger, and comforted her by the assurance, that
while

while life remained, her recipe would prove infallible.

The natural firmness of Miss Dudley's mind was perhaps more conducive to her recovering her wonted calm, than my good friend's oratory. She dried her tears, and thanking her with an air of mild benignity for her attention, intreated that she might see her father immediately, "while my mind," added she emphatically, "can exert its recovered strength."

Mr. Pelham's generous heart melted with compassion. He withdrew to apprise his friend, that "the fond darling of his soul," as he styled her, was arrived. Mrs. Penelope had now a fair opportunity for describing the cures effected by her nostrum; but I am afraid she had not an attentive auditor, for at the most interesting period of her narrative, Louisa received the expected summons, and obeyed it as fast as her trembling limbs would permit. She drew aside the curtains with eager impatience. Her father, supported by Mr. Pelham, had raised himself

himself

himself upon his elbow ; and he welcomed her with a penetrating smile. “ My dear nurse is come to take care of me,” said he. “ I have been too impatient, love, for thy arrival. Come to my arms. Restoration hangs upon thy lips.”

His emaciated countenance, and the laborious weakness of his voice, shook his daughter's fortitude. She hung over him in silence, and bathed his pallid cheek with tears.

“ Do not alarm thyself so much,” continued Mr. Dudley ; “ my danger is not so imminent. My worthy friends here are too anxiously solicitous, too apprehensive. Recollect yourself, my child. I expect consolation from your society. You are to enable me to suffer.”

“ Oh !” the tortured Louisa was tempted to exclaim ; “ who will console, who will support me ? In what asylum shall I hide my orphan head ? Gracious Heaven ! deprive me not of my only friend and protector !” Her native piety recalled her thoughts from this melancholy excursion.

excursion. She recollected the endearing titles of "friend of the friendless," and "father of the fatherless," which the great author of creation had deigned to assume; and her soul firmly anchored upon the rock of ages.

CHAP. XXXVII.

An instance of the strong interest which dignified distress can excite.

NO sooner had Miss Dudley recovered sufficient strength to look beyond the gloom of a temporary parting, than a serene smile diffused itself over her countenance. She now fixed her eyes steadily upon her admirable father, and with awful pleasure contemplated the undiminished glory of the never-dying intellectual power, which beamed forth with superior splendor from under the ruins of the tottering mortal fabrick. Though her countenance was not regularly beautiful, it generally attracted admiration
from

from being an expressive index of the excellence of her heart. Her composed tenderness and dignified patience did not now escape the attention of an accurate judge of character and manners.

Mr. Dudley raised his eyes to the amiable youth, who still supported him. "Thank you, my dear Pelham," said he; "now lay me gently down upon my pillow. I hope to have a good night, and will dismiss you all."

"Miss Dudley," returned he, "must be fatigued with her journey; but I must insist upon watching you to-night. To-morrow morning I will resign you to her cares."

"I am not sensible of the least fatigue," replied Louisa; "and you know we *professed* nurses always sleep best in our patient's apartment. I shall be able to repose myself in that arm-chair, and if my father appears easy, enjoy a very comfortable night."

"We must yield to her in this point," said Mr. Dudley. "The dear girl is
very

very tenacious of her opinion, and will not consider my medicines to be efficacious, unless I receive them from her hands. Besides, we must settle the plan of our voyage. Good night, Pelham, do not fail to enquire when the next packet will be ready; for we must not expect to take our passage in that which is now under sailing orders."

Mr. Pelham withdrew in silence, with his heart divided between grief and admiration. Mr. Dudley's anguish not permitting him to lie composed, he affected a degree of sprightliness, and enquired after his plantations and improvements, with the interested curiosity of one who hoped to see them rise to perfection. At intervals he talked of their intended expedition; and described the natural advantages of Spain, and the austere manners of its haughty indolent inhabitants, from observations which he had made in a former journey to that kingdom. His discourse was merely intended to confirm his daughter's agitated spirits, for he

he felt *certain* that he should never set out for any other country, but that from which no traveller returns.

Thus passed the night;—in the morning Dr. L. came to make what he termed a friendly, instead of a professional visit. Mr. Dudley understood the distinction. He wished to ask some questions, but was interrupted by Mrs. Penelope, who came again to urge the propriety of administering her infallible medicine. Dr. L. on being consulted, owned the patient was in a state to admit of hazardous experiments, and withdrew, promising to call again in the evening.

Mrs. Penelope might now be said to enjoy her full importance. Every domestick was employed to procure or prepare the respective ingredients, which she mixed with her own hands, according to the prescribed rule. She at length approached Mr. Dudley's bedside with the celebrated compound, but whether like Circe with the poisonous chalice,

chalice, or like Hygeia with the restorative cup, the event will determine.

The immediate effect certainly did not realize her sanguine expectations. Perhaps Mr. Dudley's strength was too far exhausted; or he might want *faith*, which I am told is a necessary auxiliary in this class of remedies; for they often lie *dormant*, unless quickened by a sort of reaction in the patient's mind; or the herbs might not be gathered at the right period of the moon, whose influence in pharmacy is unquestionable. I will not dare to arraign the infallibility of the recipe, but will only state, that Mr. Dudley appeared considerably worse after the operation, in the opinion of every body but Mrs. Penelope; who, having the same *faith* in her preparation as Don Quixote had in the balsam of Firebrass, perceived strong symptoms of immediate recovery. She retired exulting in her physical knowledge, to enjoy the pleasure of a pool at Tredrille, with two select friends.

Dr.

Dr. L. did not confirm Mrs. Penelope's opinion at his evening visit. Mr. Dudley had previously requested to be left alone with his physician; "I perceive, Sir," said the exalted man, "that you are sensible I am much worse, and I thank you for your explicit behaviour. I *could* not be deceived by common professional forms, and you are too liberal to adopt them. I have seen enough of life to be willing to resign it; but we are not called into existence merely for ourselves, and there are circumstances which make me wish that I could at this time recover. Do you know of any experiment that has a chance of success?"

The Dr. replied that an operation might be performed upon his side, but that it was excruciating and highly dangerous.

"I will submit to it cheerfully," replied Mr. Dudley. "Let the surgeons attend me at five o'clock to-morrow morning. I do not wish for any of the family to be informed of it."

In pursuance of this resolution he answered every interrogatory with an assurance that he was much better, and disposed to slumber. He perceived by Louisa's eyes on her re-entering the room, that she had discovered his increased danger, and he endeavoured to confirm her sinking spirits by inspiring a degree of false hope. "Do not, my love, entirely depend upon my physician's report; a sick man is the best judge of his own feelings. I flatter myself that I shall have a comfortable night. Go early to bed, and you will be sufficiently refreshed to attend me in the morning. I shall compose myself with the thought that you are tranquil."

Miss Dudley did not controvert this opinion. She tenderly wished him a good night, and withdrew to her own apartment. Her breaking heart required some relief, and she now recollected that, at her express desire, she was lodged in a small room separated from her father's by a thin partition. She therefore hastily
left

left it, and took two or three turns in an adjoining ante-chamber, undetermined how to dispose of herself for a few hours. If she joined Mrs. Penelope's party, it would only be to receive felicitations, and to hear prognosticks which her reason sadly disproved: or probably she might be pressed to take a hand at cards, as a sure specifick against melancholy. She had ever felt a tenderness for the prejudices and peculiarities of age; but at this time, her mind was in a state to render "solitude the best society."

She at length withdrew to the library, and endeavoured to relieve her dejection by applying to some of the treasures with which it was stored! But wit had lost its attack point, and elegance its forcible attraction. She could not follow an argument through its long train of deductions, and the best-told narrative failed to interest her attention. She returned the books to their places, and after a minute's pause sunk upon her knees. Grief has been termed the parent of elo-

quence ;— it is peculiarly so in an informed well-regulated mind. She raised her eyes, the feelings of her agitated soul animated every impassioned feature. Her snowy hands remained clasped in anguish, and regardless of the tears which fell copiously upon them. In the warm flow of unstudied elocution her lips expressed the piety of a seraph, chastised by the humble awe of a weak, dependent mortal. She supplicated Heaven to spare her father, her only friend and comfort ; but she asked with submission. She painted an orphan's sorrows ; but not with the dark colourings of despair. Her mind appeared to gather strength from her divine employment ; her tears ceased to flow ; a serene sweetness beamed in her countenance, and when she rose from her knees to retire, her whole form seemed inspired with supernatural intelligence, and expressed the most lively resemblance of superior beings which the human imagination can form.

Mr.

Mr. Pelham's apprehension for his friend having rendered him unfit for company, he had retired to spend his evening in a reading closet at the upper end of his library. His attention was drawn from his studies by the sound of a female voice. He stepped softly to the door, and became an unobserved spectator of the scene I have described. His sensations were in some respects similar to those expressed by Sir Eldred of the Bower ;

“ My scorn has oft the dart repell'd
 “ Which guileful beauty threw ;
 “ But goodness heard, and grace beheld,
 “ Must every heart subdue.”

After she had withdrawn he returned into his closet, but even his favourite authors were now tasteless. The pleadings of Demosthenes were studied and artificial, when compared to the more lively oratory of a deeply-affected heart ; nor did the morality of the divine Tully strike the soul with such strong conviction

in favour of the noblest virtues, as it received from the powerful example of youth and innocence.

He left his books, and walked to the table, against which Miss Dudley had lately knelt; it was still wet with her tears. There, bending over the marks of holy sorrow, he recalled her image to his recollection. Even when his heart was most infatuated by the superior brilliancy of Marianne's charms, it had done justice to Louisa's virtues. Time and absence had blunted the pain of disappointment, and gradually reconciled his mind to the loss of his first love; but his attachment had been too strong to permit him to form a second choice, though every hope had been excluded by her marriage. He had too strong sense to yield to whining complaints, and he submitted to a *severe mortification* with manly firmness; but whenever Fancy recalled to his mind any pleasing ideas, the attracting image of Marianne Dudley rose to his view, and the charms of other fair ones faded

faded at the comparison. Yet even that fascinating form seemed to yield to the superiour loveliness of intellectual beauty, and he determined if possible to rescue Louisa from an orphan's woes, and to solicit the affections of so valuable a woman.

CHAP. XXXVIII.

A circumstance of awful solemnity prepares the way for a very desirable event.

MR. Dudley spent the night in agony, but his fortitude seemed to increase with his pains; and his desire of not disturbing his daughter, who, he found, lay near him, repressed the groan of anguish. The powers of his mind continued unimpaired; he felt his danger, and considering it possible that he might not survive the intended operation, he desired that Mr. Pelham might be called at an early hour. The worthy man flew to his apartment, but shocked at the visible

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change

change in his friend's countenance, he burst into tears, which the dying hero thus reproved: "Check this unmanly sorrow, my good Sir; mine is no uncommon lot. I do but undergo the general law of nature, to which this world is subject; a world mortal and perishable like man its lord. I have many comforts, at times they predominate over my sufferings; my soul is tranquil; I look forward to futurity with hope. I have only *one* trouble."—"Confide it to me," said Mr. Pelham, endeavouring to stifle his grief.

"Blessed be Heaven for a little interval of ease," resumed Mr. Dudley; "I am persuaded that you will exert your kind endeavours to procure that satisfaction to my family from the Spanish government, which I could not in person demand. The peculiar circumstances of my story must move attention, but should you fail of success, I commend my character to your care. Defend it from opprobrium; say that I was not intentionally unjust; unforeseen incidents, a variety of misfortunes, all

all united to prevent the favourite wish of my heart. Those whom I have injured will complain; endeavour to soften the asperity of their complaints."

"Your memory," said Mr. Pelham, clasping the hand of Mr. Dudley, "shall be as irreproachable as your life. I do not doubt but that ample justice will be done you, yet if it should be withheld, I will make myself your *executor*. I know the amount of your debts; calm your worthy heart; were they double the sum, I would with pleasure discharge them."

"You are too good, too generous; I asked not this; I expected it not; your kindness pains me." Mr. Dudley sunk upon his pillow, and remained silent a few moments.

The surgeons now entered; he opened his eyes, and welcomed them with a slight motion of his hand: "I have some private business," said he; "go, dear Pelham, leave me a little while; if I am worse I will send for you."—"Gentlemen," resumed Mr. Dudley, when every thing was

prepared, "I am afraid your intended assistance will not succeed; I am much weakened by a bad night; but act as you think best. I am ready, my mind is collected. Yet if you think I shall not survive the operation, I would first see my daughter."

On hearing these words, Miss Dudley rushed into the room; her anxiety had only permitted her to throw herself upon the bed, from which she had frequently risen during the night, and with laudable curiosity hastened to hear if any groans proceeded from her father's chamber. From the silence which prevailed there, she had composed herself with the thought that Mrs. Penelope's hopes were not entirely visionary. The sound of strange voices which she imperfectly heard, had cleared away her broken slumbers, and her father's words hurried her into the room in an agony.

The principal surgeon humanely endeavoured to console her. He persuaded her that opening the ulcer in the side might be attended

attended with salutary consequences. "Let me stay then," said she, "while it is performed; I can rub his temples: I know I can be of service;"—"Retire, my love," said Mr. Dudley: "Your presence would overpower me. If I faint you shall be summoned." Louisa clasped her pious hands in mental prayer, and withdrew.

The surgeons now examined their patient, and unanimously declared, that from *present* appearances the proposed incision must be declined. No good could possibly arise from it, a mortification having already taken place.

"I am sensible," said the heroick object of their care, "that nothing can *now* be done for me. I thank you for your humane attention;—yet if you can inform me how long I may continue to suffer"—

"Your sufferings, Sir," said one of them, "will very speedily terminate, but you may live several hours."

Mr. Dudley waved his hand, and they withdrew in tears.

He now resolved to prepare his soul
by

by the most solemn christian duties for its expected journey. Previous to the clergyman's arrival, Mr. Pelham seated himself beside the bed of death, lost in sorrow, and insensible to the frequent sobs which proceeded from Louisa's apartment.

Mr. Dudley pressed his hand ; " Comfort my child, dear amiable friend, comfort my forlorn Louisa : a singular attachment subsisted between us, it was more than the tie of blood. She was my adviser, my comforter, my companion, my friend ; our tastes, our habits, our desires corresponded. I am not anxious *now* respecting her fortune. I know that she has sufficient greatness of soul to dignify narrow circumstances by cheerful patience ; but my loss will sit heavy upon her heart, console her as a *friend*, and if the weakness of her sex should expose her to injury, be her *protector*."

" My heart," said Pelham, sinking upon his knees, " aspires to a more sacred title. Ever since I knew *you* it has panted to be allied to your virtues ; disappointed in
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the object of my youthful love, I have with maturest judgment formed a second attachment. You once promised me your Marianne, I now ask for *your Louisa.*”

“Gracious Heaven!” cried Mr. Dudley, raising himself up, and with an energetic voice which seemed to intimate recovered health and strength, “but did I understand you rightly? Do you indeed love my Louisa?”

“Even when I was her sister’s adorer, I honoured her character, and esteemed her virtues; they now blaze upon me with invincible splendor. The delicacy of her sentiments may induce her to reject a man who confesses a prior attachment. Support my pretensions by your consent, and rest assured my present love is sincere and ardent. The exalted Louisa may be influenced in favour of a passion which *you* have approved.”

“Son of my soul!” exclaimed Mr. Dudley, stretching out his arms, “come to my heart, and let it tell thee that all its *secret wishes* are now fulfilled.” Go and call

my darling to me. How blissful are my departing moments!" Mr. Pelham withdrew.

Miss Dudley hastily threw herself into her father's arms. "You seem," said she, bending over him in meek affliction, "to be somewhat revived."—"I am, my child. I thought my blood had stagnated, but joy has quickened the languid current. Why did I despair, or think thy merit could pass unnoticed? My Louisa, the worthy Pelham loves thee. Canst thou reward thy father's generous friend? He has asked me to bestow my only treasure upon him. I have not many moments to lose. Speak, my love, wilt thou be his? Away with that reserve which keeps thy *dying* father in suspense on the only subject which interests him upon earth."

No language could do justice to Miss Dudley's feelings. Grief and surprise, gratitude and love, were elevated to a painful extreme. She was told that the passion which had long been an unobserved

served but pensive inmate of her bosom, at length had met a reciprocal return. She was even called upon to confess the affection which virgin modesty had concealed. But by whom, and in what circumstances was she urged to this disclosure?

Thrice she attempted to speak, and thrice the wild palpitations of her heart forbade her utterance. At length she faintly exclaimed, "I have long esteemed him—loved him I should say. But oh, my father, at what a moment do you claim this confession."

"At a blissful one, dear delight of my soul! It is a moment which sends a joyful pilgrim back to his native country, and seals the happiness of two kindred minds. Pelham, my humane, generous, noble son, where art thou? Come and receive this blessing from my arms, while they have yet strength to bestow her on thee."

Mr. Pelham, who from motives of the purest delicacy was absent at this eclairsissement, entered at the welcome summons.

summons. Mr. Dudley held his daughter's hand between his numbed and clammy palms, and raising his eyes with patriarchal dignity, thus bestowed her on her kneeling lover. "I give her to thee, a dear and solemn trust. Look down, Gracious Creator, and bless this worthy pair. Give them long life, love, and temporal felicity : and let their last moments enjoy the holy transport, the divine beatitude which I now enjoy."

Louisa sunk in speechless anguish as he spoke ; Mr. Pelham supported her. His fond attentions recalled her fluttering senses. " Spare, oh spare, every expression of love and transport," said she. " My heart is entirely yours, but I can now attend to nothing but my father."

A serene, elevated smile, expressive of intellectual transport, beamed in Mr. Dudley's face. His agonies subsided. Instead of restless tossings and convulsive starts, he remained placidly composed. He received the most sacred rite of christ-

christianity with his beloved daughter and adopted son. As he tasted the consecrated chalice he again blessed them, the absent Marianne, and Mr. Clermont. He repeated to Louisa a parting charge for her sister; then sinking into a languid state, he dozed at intervals till the evening, when again calling his daughter to him, he drew his last breath in her arms.

CHAP. XXXIX.

Includes a greater portion of time than all the preceding narrative.

MISS Dudley, restraining her grief with sentiments of reverend awe, forbore to interrupt the departing soul. When the quivering pulse had stopped some moments, she pressed with pallid lips the honoured remains; and committing the corpse to the care of the attendants, with a request that every thing should be conducted with propriety, retired to her apartment.

Mr. Pelham followed her, he intended to have offered some topick of consolation, but his faltering voice disappointed his design, and he could only intreat her not to indulge her sorrow, lest it should affect her health. "In heart and in soul I resign him to his God," said the exalted mourner. "Ought I to sink in despair, because my beloved father is become an inhabitant of a better world? Yet allow me, Sir, to vent in privacy the fond regrets of nature, I wish to offer my first sorrows to my Maker; I trust he will enable me to support them."

Mr. Pelham acquiesced; but Mrs. Penelope was firmly of opinion that the young lady ought not to be left alone. It was expected my old friend's surprise at hearing Mr. Dudley was *really* dead, would be very great, as she even to the last perceived increasing marks of his amendment: but she happily recollected that she had administered her medicine too soon after Dr. L.'s last prescription, for

for her potion to exert its wonted efficacy. She now offered to visit Miss Dudley, and to talk her out of her melancholy, by arguments drawn from her favourite aphorisms, that "what must be will be," and "that Fate must govern all things;" but Mr. Pelham respected the sanctity of his Louisa's sorrows, and insisted that they should not be disturbed.

From the time of her father's death till every thing was prepared for his funeral, Miss Dudley never left her chamber, except twice a day to visit the corpse. There, kneeling by the coffin, she poured forth the fulness of her affectionate grateful heart. There she accustomed herself to recollect all the invaluable precepts she had received from him, respecting her conduct in life, and lest her memory should fail, she committed them to writing. "These, my father," said she, apostrophising to his spirit, which she sublimely fancied ever present with her, "These, thy elevated sentiments, shall speak to me and console me, though
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the instructive voice which uttered them is mute, and the heart which prompted them no longer beats at thy highly favoured child's approach. Yet let me reflect, though these eyes shine not upon me, they will no longer melt into tears; the human affections are indeed extinct; but sorrow will not come nigh thee. Thy tongue will never more console or instruct me, but the language of complaint has ceased for ever. Thine, my father, was an uneasy pilgrimage for thee; the change is blessed, therefore I will not mourn."

I will forbear from any further repetition of those sentiments of pious sorrow, by which Louisa and her worthy admirer expressed their unaffected grief. They were elevated and devout, and a feeling mind may easily conceive them. Nor will I circumstantially describe Mr. Pelham's behaviour, which was all that esteem, sympathy, and delicacy could prompt. The corpse was conveyed to Alderson manor, and interred in the family vault, close by Mrs. Dudley's coffin.

coffin. Mr. Pelham attended Louisa on this sad occasion, and Mr. Clermont met her at the grave. Marianne could not join in the solemn obsequies. The intelligence of her father's danger, unwarily communicated, was more than her weakened spirits could support. A premature confinement was the consequence of the shock, by which not only Lord Clermont's anxious expectations of an heir were frustrated, but her own life was endangered, and the affections of her husband farther alienated.

Hitherto the behaviour of Mr. Pelham had been more indicative of the friend than the lover. He endeavoured to divert her grief by respectful attentions, or to sooth it by sympathising in her loss; rather than to interrupt the train of her thoughts by unseasonable anticipations of expected happiness. At parting, reciprocal marks of tender regard appeared in each. He requested permission to write to her, which she readily granted; and while she accompanied Mr. Clermont

to Stannadine, she perceived that all her liveliest affections were not buried in her father's grave.

The interview between the sisters presented a scene strikingly interesting.

The lovely form of Marianne, faded by sickness and distress, was supported by the amiable Louisa; who bending over her with matronly tenderness, joined in regret for a dear father's loss, and with firmer but not less feeling heart, recapitulated the affecting narrative of his sickness and death. Mrs. Clermont bitterly bewailed her absence; "and did he not," said she, "reproach his absent Marianne, and ask why she did not come to smooth the bed of death, and to wipe the faint dews from his honoured face? And you too, my Louisa, must surely condemn your unfeeling sister, for not hastening to assist you in those pious offices."

"I have *too* long known the virtues of that tender heart to doubt that some cruel necessity detained you from us. As for our father, unkind suspicion had no part
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in his character. Almost the last words which he spake were a prayer for you. Give, said he, emphatically, my dying blessing to my dear affectionate Marianne; and thou, all gracious Heaven, preserve her from real sorrow, and lessen her sense of the smaller evils of life. Bless Mr. Clermont too, and grant them many years of prosperity and *mutual* love."

"Vain were those pious prayers," cried Mrs. Clermont in an agony; "and yet they sometimes say the good man's dying wishes are fulfilled." She then related what a lamentable change had taken place in her husband's behaviour: Miss Dudley was distressed at the recital; yet she felt willing to hope that a too lively imagination had as usual aggravated the sombre lines of life; but her own observation during her stay at Stannadine fatally confirmed the fidelity of the portrait.

She now exerted all the sympathizing tenderness of her temper, and all the strong powers of her calm discretion, to support

and console the mourner. She endeavoured to divert her from her own misfortunes by the exertion of those benevolent and active duties from which she had formerly derived pleasure. But the *spring* of Mrs. Clermont's mind was entirely broken. She pitied the distress of the poor, and when an object was *pointed* out, was willing to relieve them, but she had not vigour of soul sufficient to step out of herself, and to take a lively interest in the sorrows of others; her early and severe disappointment preyed upon her heart; she no longer felt any inclination for amusement, or any desire to excel, and her thoughts continually wandered within the gloomy pale of her own calamity.

Mr. Clermont (now commenced a man of the world) wandered from one place of publick resort to another, in pursuit of that fleeting happiness which still eluded his grasp. When disappointed he returned home; but it was only to contrast the *increased* pensiveness of his wife's behaviour

viour with the gay scenes he had just forsaken, and he derived from her conduct a fresh desire to enjoy them.

Miss Dudley deeply felt for her sister's woes, but it was her *only* affliction. Her own prospects were peculiarly brilliant. Mr. Pelham's letters were dictated by that manly tenderness which shone in all his conduct; they were affectionate without insipidity, and polite without flattery. In one of them he informed her, that her business with the Spanish government was amicably settled; the whole property remitted to England, her father's debts discharged; and a surplus of five thousand pounds left at her disposal. "I rejoice at this event," said he, "as it will prevent your generous mind from feeling the pain of *supposed* obligation. And yet, my Louisa, should little pecuniary affairs ever disturb the felicity of *those* lovers, who are so happy as to be able to boast on *one* side elegant competence, and on the *other* transcendent worth?"

If Mr. Pelham had doubted as to the

actual transfer of his heart from its *once* dear object, the sensations he experienced on revisiting Stannadine would have convinced him; he beheld the beauty of Mrs. Clermont withering under the worm of discontent, her features contracted by peevish melancholy, and her temper rendered irritable by disappointment. Though such an object moved his pity, admiration and love could only be awakened by the mild intelligence and unruffled sweetness of a Louisa. His impatience to call the meek-eyed angel his would scarcely permit him to wait the expiration of the twelve months, which she had devoted to the robes of mourning. At length the amiable pair plighted their mutual vows.

Immediately after their nuptials, Mr. Pelham conducted his bride to his country seat. As he led her the tour of his pleasure-grounds, she was particularly pleased with a long avenue of majestick oaks, sloping down the declivity of a hill, on the summit of which a fine Dorick temple was dedicated to Integrity and Forti-

Fortitude. Mrs. Pelham admired the attick simplicity of the appropriate emblems; but her attention was suddenly arrested by one object *superlatively* interesting; a fine bust of her father in white marble, was placed at the upper end of the building, and on a beautiful Etruscan urn under it, she read the following inscription:

Here, as to firm Integrity we kneel,
 And light to Fortitude the votive flame;
 Thy memory, Dudley! animates our zeal,
 And purer ardours kindle at thy name.

Here, when we mourn the father and the friend,
 Hope shall the funeral pall of sorrow raise;
 And selfish Grief its lamentations end,
 Thy life to copy, and thy death to praise.

Here, if we faint beneath the task of life,
 Thy bright example shall new force supply;
 Arm our weak souls for renovated strife,
 And point our just ambition to the sky.

Oh, ever lov'd, while o'er thy sacred earth
 Affection graves thy deeds, and drops a tear;
 Our future lives shall emulate thy worth:
 Our future virtues prove that thou wert dear.

Mr. Pelham thus tenderly addressed her when she had recovered from her first emotion. "I propose myself many delightful hours in this tranquil retreat. Here, my Louisa, we will often retire to hold communications with our own hearts, and to form a just estimate of life. We will not survey its *little sorrows* through the gloom of misanthropy, nor will we judge of its *pleasures* from the colourings of enthusiasm. We will recollect your father's precepts, and consider it as a chequered scene, from which the virtuous well regulated mind may derive many advantages. Here we will converse with that ever-respected man; we will feast our eyes with gazing upon his features, and our minds by recalling the *nobler* likeness of the informing soul. We will think of him, not with that useless regret which ends in pensive melancholy, much less with that bold sorrow which audaciously dares to question Providence; but our remembrance shall tend to meliorate our own hearts, and our love prompt us to

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exercise those virtues which have glorified him, and will exalt us to equal happiness. Should any little error in the conduct of either, give pain to the susceptibility of fond attachment, here we will come, and fancy that marble animated, and that it repeats the excellent observations we have so often heard: *That imperfection is always mixed with human virtues, and infelicity with human bliss.*

CHAP. XL.

The conclusion. Mrs. Prudentia ceremoniously takes leave of all her characters.

I HAVE now brought my narrative to a period ; but as Swift observes, that no well-bred modern author will omit the conclusion, I willingly subjoin one.

I once intended to have adopted supplicatory addressees to the candour and generosity of my *gentle* readers ; but recollecting that there has *lately* been an uncommon demand for these qualities,

and apprehending they must have been entirely worn out in the service of my sister novelists, I am under a necessity of depending upon the taste and discernment of the age, without even advancing the usual pleas of little leisure and painful interruptions. Indeed I am afraid readers care little about an author's private history, and after all the civil things we *can* say, only appreciate our merit by our ability to entertain and instruct *them*. Therefore, instead of obtruding myself upon the publick, the remaining pages shall be employed in describing the *present* situation of my principal characters.

Nearly three years have elapsed since Miss Dudley gave her hand to Mr. Pelham, and the enamoured husband *still* considers that event as the happiest of his life. She has fanned the torch of Love with such admirable dexterity, that it continues to burn with a calm steady flame; and with so little diminution of its pristine brightness, that Mr. Pelham
is

is celebrated by all who know him, for being a polite, tender husband, to an unassuming wife. Her character rises in his estimation every hour, and she often surprises him by the discovery of some new virtue, or graceful accomplishment; which unobtrusive delicacy had hitherto concealed from his observation. Her excellent judgment, tempered by cheerful affability, induces him to confide in her as a friend, and to admire her as a companion; his high opinion of the superiority of *her* conduct, prompts him to be more observant of his *own*, and to guard with scrupulous care against his natural infirmities, lest they should prejudice him in her esteem. He is now acquainted with the preference which his Louisa felt for him, during the time of his attachment to Mrs. Clermont; and his greatness of soul induces him to admire the delicacy, that so closely concealed it from every eye, and the generosity, that resolved by conquering it to

sacrifice every selfish wish to the good of others.

Mrs. Penelope Pelham, who was extremely averse to her nephew's connection with Miss Dudley, from a persuasion that he was deserving of a Duchess, and at last consented to the marriage because there is a fate in these things which cannot be withstood, is now completely reconciled.

She resides with the young couple, not only to see that every thing goes on right, but also to please Mr. Pelham, who she is convinced could not be happy without her. We have corresponded several years.

Her letters are now generally filled with the witticisms of master Pelham, who is just twenty months old; and by her account a prodigy. She sometimes speaks of her niece, allows her to be an obliging good-tempered young woman, and so well informed in housekeeping, that Mrs. Penelope has yielded the family affairs

affairs to her management, and they are now almost as well conducted as when she herself presided. She mentions amongst her niece's perfections, that she is an excellent milliner, and makes "mighty becoming bonnets" for ladies who are not very young. She has also learned to play at Tredrille.

Louisa has not deserted Seatondell. Indeed she is particularly attached to the little farm, which afforded an asylum to herself and her father in their adversity; and which was planted and decorated under his directions. Mrs. Arby and the rest of the neighbours are "prodigiously proud" when she honours them with a visit, and they discover many excellencies in Mrs. Pelham, which they overlooked in Louisa Dudley. I find she has enlarged the charitable institutions which she formerly founded, and it gives me particular pleasure to hear that Mr. Pelham has made poor Walden tolerably happy, by presenting him with a living.

Mr. Clermont is become a peer by his father's death, but the acquisition of a title has not contributed to his repose. The late Lord's sentiments in politicks were so violently in opposition to government, that they have operated as an antidote to his son; who being tired of the insipidity of a fashionable life, has entered into administration, with the sanguine hope of having *now* found the long-desired good. His features have acquired a cast of mystery, and his frank impassioned manner is changed into reserve and importance. He sometimes pays a short visit to his Lady at the Park, who welcomes him with tears, and endeavours to detain him by complaints. Her time passes very uncomfortably. She has in a great degree secluded herself from society, some of her neighbours say she is deranged, others think her intolerably proud; all blame her for living unhappily with a handsome, generous, well-behaved husband. Few can understand her sorrows, and fewer have courage

courage to stem the torrent of publick opinion by pitying them.

The Dowager Lady Clermont is a convert to methodism, and is esteemed a *blessed* acquisition by that society.

Miss Milton's sense of her friend's injuries is so very acute, that she has rejected two unexceptionable offers, and transferring the faults of *one* man to the whole species, has declared herself a *determined* member of my sisterhood. Her resentment against the base, ungrateful, tyrannick sex is so great, that she entirely avoids the society of gentlemen. Her apartments are decorated with histories intended to describe their falsehood; and she spends her time in writing satires against perjured swains, and elegies upon deceived nymphs. Her favourite subject of conversation is to inveigh against Lord Clermont, and some of those censures have reached his Lordship, and contributed to increase the unkindness which she deploras.

After several unsuccessful attempts to form a matrimonial connection with a woman of character, Sir William Milton has taken Miss Morton again into keeping. Their tempers are too violent for cordiality, scarce a day passes without a quarrel; and though he congratulates himself that he is not bound to the fury for life, she makes his haughty spirit bend to her controul. Nay, she affirms, that she may be Lady Milton when she pleases, and the bets in this particular are two to one against Sir William.

A very strange event has taken place at Danbury since I mentioned my favourite abode, and I beg my readers pardon for not informing them of it sooner. Could any one have believed that after thirty-five years of irreproachable conduct, Miss Cardamum should at last elope with Mr. Inkle. Though this match was completed under the auspices of Cupid, it does not prove to be a very happy one. Mr. Cardamum is inexorable in point of fortune, and as Mrs. Inkle positively

tively refuses to go behind the counter, or to do any thing inconsistent with her dignity, I am afraid the young man is plagued with a well-bred wife, and a scanty income. We have excluded her from our genteel assembly : I am told she is much piqued at it, but such an unpardonable dereliction of all rules of decorum ought to be severely reprobated.

A great deal has been said lately respecting Captain Target's attention to Mrs. Eleanor Singleton. They have been surprised tête-a-tête at picquet; and I saw him with my *own* eyes carry little Fido from church last Friday, for fear he should dirty his new pink satin ribbon. I have a very good opinion of my friend's understanding, and I *hope* it was only a neighbourly action.

Since Mrs. Inkle's marriage, Mrs. Medium has laid strong siege to Mr. Alsop, and she manages the battery of her daughter Dolly's merits so admirably that I think his heart *must* surrender at discretion.

discretion. His housekeeper, Mrs. Betty, is of a different opinion.

I shall conclude with a song lately composed by Mrs. Pelham; who still occasionally sacrifices to the Muses. My correspondent Mrs. Penelope has luckily favoured me with a copy, just in time for publication :

Go, daughters of Fashion, for pleasure repine,
The joys ye pursue are not equal to mine;
The humours of thousands for yours must agree,
Mine centre in Henry, and Henry's in me.

The rose thrice hath bloom'd on the chaplet of May,
Since I bow'd at the altar, and vow'd to obey;
Talk not of restrictions, the bond I approve,
'Tis sanction'd by reason, religion, and love.

Gay carols the lark as we rise in the morn,
And at evening the blackbird chaunts sweet on
the thorn,

We join in the concert, why should we refrain?
Our hearts are as grateful, as lively our strain.

We bask in the sunshine which summer supplies,
And count, fertile autumn! thy exquisite dies;
No terror in ice-mantled winter we see,
A book and a song still can conquer ennui.

Domestick,

Domestick, yet cheerful, delighted to blend,
By prudent attentions the lover and friend,
In wedlock's full cup we some bitters expect,
And allow for the frailties we try to correct.

Though shunning the many, wild Comus's crew;
For social enjoyment we chuse but a few;
Those few round our table shall frequently meet,
Sincere bethe welcome, and simple the treat.

Our boy on my bosom I cherish with pride,
He calls to those duties we gladly divide;
May he live when our limit of being is done,
And our names and our virtues survive in our son.

THE END.



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(Written by Mrs. WEST)

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